DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 340 285 HE 025 135

AUTHOR LaSalle, Patricia Ann
TITLE College and University Magazines: Building Credibility To Advance Your Institution.
INSTITUTION Council for Advancement and Support of Education, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-89964-284-5
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 130p.
AVAILABLE FROM CASE Resources, Suite 400, 11 Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036-1261 ($24.00 members, $32.00 non-members).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Alumni; Colleges; Editing; Editors; *Higher Education; *Institutional Advancement; Mission Statements; Organizational Communication; *Periodicals; Public Relations; Universities

ABSTRACT

This monograph examines college and university magazines aimed at alumni and designed to promote the institution and enhance its image. The first third contains three chapters. The first chapter reviews the evolution of these publications from their start in the late 1800s to today. The next chapter addresses questions of a magazine's role, whether it should serve to simply provide information or build the institution's image. The third chapter looks at policies and how they are developed: management and staffing, audiences, reporting relationships with executives in the institution, sources of support, content, and editorial authority. An appendix to this section contains a list of professional benchmarks for editors, a statement of ethics, and sample mission statements. The second and third sections contain reprints from the magazine CURRENTS for professionals in institutional advancement. The reprints in the first group address substance and style questions including writing, format, faculty authors, research news, editorial authority and independence, giving support to fund raising, and plagiarism. The second group of reprints offers ideas for change including format, mission statements, surviving reduced funding, management, and converting to recycled paper. A bibliography offers 33 items. (JB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED340285

Council for Advancement and Support of Education

College And University Magazines

Building Credibility To Advance Your Institution

By Patricia Ann LaSalle

HE 025 135

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

CASE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

© 1991 by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education

ISBN 0-89964-284-5

Printed in the United States of America

In 1974, the American Alumni Council (founded in 1913) and the American College Public Relations Association (founded in 1917) merged to become the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

Today, approximately 2,900 colleges, universities, and independent elementary and secondary schools in the U.S. and 20 other countries belong to CASE. This makes CASE the largest nonprofit 501(c)(3) education association in terms of institutional membership. Representing the member institutions in CASE are more than 13,000 individual professionals in institutional advancement.

Nonprofit education-related organizations such as hospitals, museums, libraries, cultural or performing arts groups, public radio and television stations, or foundations established for public elementary and secondary schools may affiliate with CASE as Educational Associates. Commercial firms that serve the education field may affiliate as Subscribers.

CASE's mission is to advance understanding and support of education for the benefit of society. Central to its mission are its member colleges, universities, and independent schools. CASE fulfills this mission by providing services to beginning, mid-level, and senior advancement professionals; direct services to member institutions; and public affairs programs that bond higher education to the public interest.

CASE offers books, videotapes, and focus issues of the award-winning monthly magazine, CURRENTS, to professionals in institutional advancement. The books cover topics in alumni administration, communications and marketing, fund raising, management, and student recruitment. For a copy of the catalog, write to CASE RESOURCES, Suite 400, 11 Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036-1261. For more information about CASE programs and services, call (202) 328-5900.

Copyediting by Susan Hunt
Typesetting by Sarah D. Eveland and Kathleen Tibbetts
Cover design by Craig McCausland

Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Suite 400, 11 Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036-1261

To Eric and Jim

"The education of tomorrow's citizens is the single most important enterprise of any society."

— Dorothy F. Williams, Professor Emeritus, Simmons College;
Former Editor, *Simmons Review*

Contents

Foreword i
Peter McE. Buchanan

Acknowledgments iii

Section 1

1. Chapter 1: The Evolution of College and University Magazines: From Club Notes to Controversial News 1

2. Chapter 2: The Magazine's Role: From Information-giving to Image-building 9

3. Chapter 3: Policies and Practices: From Funding to Freedom 27

Appendix

Professional Benchmarks for Periodicals Editors 37

CASE Statement of Ethics for Periodicals Editors 39

Sample Mission Statements of College and University Magazines 40

Section 2:* CURRENTS *Reprints: Substance and Style

Making Good Writing Great: The message is clear: Keep it short, original, and vibrant 47
Paula LaRocque

Return of the Living Dull: Freshen stale publications by updating your vision, methods, and attitude 49
Elise Hancock

A Fresh Bill of Fare: Editors share their best solutions for beating the what-to-fix-for-deadline blues 50
Linda Keith

The Best Medicine: Faculty authors can pump new life into your campus periodical 52
Thomas M. Flagg

Electrifying Science: How to turn up the voltage and bring research news to life 55
Roger Martin

Scientific Methods: Basic tips on writing periodical articles about research 58
Mary Ruth Yoe

Who's in Charge Here? Getting the authority you need to edit an effective alumni periodical 60
Marshall A. Ledger

Beyond Control: "The notion of editorial independence is a snare and a delusion, in the institutional press and elsewhere" 63
Bernard R. Carman

To Print or Not to Print: Six editors tell about their toughest editorial decisions — and the consequences 65
Jack McCain, Anonymous, Suzanne Johnson, Eleanor Howard, George L. Beezer, Bill Noblitt

Détente with Development: Editors can give fund raisers the support they seek by listening, defending, and innovating 67
Robert J. Bliwise

The Editor as Insider-Outsider: Six enlightening definitions of an honorable, if misunderstood, calling 70
Marsha Scott Gori

Editorial Etiquette: When it comes to dealing with authors, every editor needs a guide to good manners 71
Jay Heinrichs

When Borrowing Becomes Burglary: Recognizing — and fighting — plagiarism 75
John Shea

What's Wrong with Alumni Periodicals: Expert advice on how to make yours better 78
Walton R. Collins

Section 3:* CURRENTS *Reprints: Ideas and Innovations

Making a Statement: Why you should — or shouldn't — write statements of editorial mission, goals, and policy 82
Robert J. Bliwise

A Fascinating Picture: A journalist's thesis illustrates the current state of affairs for alumni periodicals 85
Donna Shoemaker

The Move to Magazine: If your staff can provide the substance, this format's got all the style you could want, campus editors say 88
Patricia Ann LaSalle

"Why Don't We Have a Magazine?" The format question has become academic, says one editor 91
Marsha Scott Gori

The Fast-paced Alternative: Short lead time and timely content may make a tabloid format the right choice for your institution 92
Janis D. Gleason and Lynn Donham

True to Format: When is a magazine not a magazine? When it's a tabloid, a newsletter, or a creative combination 94
Robin Goldman Netherton

Magamorphosis: How a make-over added substance — and glamour — to SMU's quarterly alumni magazine 95
Patricia Ann LaSalle

Magazine Miracles: Advice on excellence for underfunded, understaffed campus editors 98
Catherine L. O'Shea

Two for the Price of One: Slipping an extra publication into your regular periodical can double your savings — or your work 100
Donna Shoemaker

Editors Under Siege: Are you fighting for your periodical's life? Here's the ammunition you need 103
Donna Shoemaker

Staying Alive: When the budget cutter cometh, be ready to slash costs and revive revenues 105
Tina M. Hay

Sanity in the Small Shop: Tips from an expert on editing an alumni magazine with a small staff and limited budget 108
Aida K. Press

Going Green: How campus publications offices are making the move to recycled paper 111
Ann Granning Bennett

Bibliography 117

About the Author 121

Foreword

We are pleased to present *College and University Magazines: Building Credibility to Advance Your Institution*, CASE's first book on this topic. Author Patricia Ann LaSalle, now at Southern Methodist University, is an experienced university magazine editor and a former CASE staff editor.

LaSalle gives us a historical perspective on magazine publishing, whose content evolved "from club notes to controversial news." The first campus magazines, which appeared in the late 1800s, were not impressive: "The alumni associations often were the publishers, and the editors usually were alumni directors who had little or no training in journalism. Their products showed it."

We've come a long way since then. Today, as we approach the year 2000, LaSalle sees promise that "alumni magazines will continue to mature both in substance and style."

What does a college or university magazine do, and what *should* it do? LaSalle seeks to answer these questions through surveying a sample of the best in the field and by citing the experience and the insights of those pioneering editors "whose talent and tenacity ... established a tradition and a profession."

She addresses the issue of editorial freedom:

> No longer does higher education exist in sublime isolation, its ivy-covered walls protecting it from public scrutiny. Education, like big-time athletics and old-time religion, has experienced its share of scandal in recent years, from the football field to the science lab to the presidential suite. Higher education can indeed supply the stuff of sensational headlines — and alumni will most certainly read them.... Alumni who ... see only puffery in their magazines will know they are being duped. Perhaps the only development deadlier to alumni loyalty than a scandal is the cover-up of a scandal.

In LaSalle's survey of the policies and practices of college and university magazines, she found that the search for support is an almost universal one:

> As colleges and universities continue to feel the strain of stretched finances, will magazines survive the quest to cut expenses? If magazines do survive, will the increased competition for donor support, and the resulting fear of donor backlash, cause administrators to overreact with undue restraints on editorial freedom?

As the founder of *Columbia*, I struggled, as so many others have, with these questions. To give further insight on such issues, LaSalle has carefully selected a collection of recent articles representing "the best of CURRENTS" on magazine content and management.

College and University Magazines: Building Credibility to Advance Your Institution gives us perspective on where we've been and where we think we're going. It can help us face "the challenge of interpreting higher education through ... magazines."

Peter McE. Buchanan
CASE President
November 1991

Acknowledgments

Throughout this monograph you will hear the voices of college and university editors whose talent and tenacity have established a tradition and a profession worthy of recognition. As one who has been influenced by them, I offer — as an expression of gratitude — this monograph. It draws from their expertise as shared through interviews with them and writings by them. To these I have added my own perspective developed as the magazine editor at Georgetown University in the early seventies, later as an editor of articles and monographs at CASE, where I observed publishing practices nationwide, and today as the director of periodicals and magazine editor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas.

Special recognition goes to Virginia Carter Smith, former president of CASE, for her inestimable contributions to our profession; to the late Charles Michael Helmken, former CASE vice president, for his creativity and courage in promoting excellence in advancement publishing; to Robert M. Rhodes, editor of the *Brown Alumni Monthly* and pioneer in his own right, for his steadfast mentorship; and to Donna Shoemaker, editor of the Alumni Magazine Consortium, for adding to our understanding of magazine practices through the comprehensive research of her 1988 master's thesis.

I add my deep appreciation for the leadership of the late Andrew D. Parker Jr., former SMU vice president for advancement, previously of Brown and Duke. At SMU, he translated his respect for our profession into philosophical and tangible support enabling our young magazine to become an attentive student of the masters in magazine publishing. Today, SMU Vice President for Advancement William H. Lively Jr. provides his own unwavering support and understanding of the challenge of interpreting higher education through college and university magazines. We know that in our profession, achievement is the shared domain not only of editors, writers, and designers, but of institutional leaders who support the freedom upon which excellence grows.

Patricia Ann LaSalle
Dallas, Texas
November 1991

Section 1

Chapter 1

The Evolution of College And University Magazines: From Club Notes to Controversial News

Alumni periodicals began appearing two centuries after the first institutions of higher education in the American colonies opened their doors. The precise history of these first attempts to communicate systematically with alumni remains elusive.

Chartered in 1636, Harvard University, the nation's first institution of higher education, became in 1840 the first to establish an official alumni association. But the university did not publish an alumni periodical until 1898, when the *Harvard Bulletin* appeared. In 1891 Yale University began publishing a weekly alumni newspaper, credited with being the first alumni periodical that, from its inception, dealt solely with matters of interest to alumni, according to authors Richard Weiner and James F. Colasurdo. Three years later, Princeton University started producing the *Alumni Princetonian* as the Saturday edition of its student newspaper (Weiner and Colasurdo, *College Alumni Publications*, 1980).

Dorothy F. Williams, former editor of the *Simmons Review* and a frequent writer on alumni publishing, cites the College of Wooster as the first institution to publish an alumni magazine — the *Alumni Bulletin*, established in 1886 (Williams, "The Unsinkable Alumni Magazine," *Communicating With Alumni*, 1979). Some sources, however, give that distinction to Cornell University.

The magazine of the University of Pennsylvania traces its origin to one of the founding fathers of the nation, Benjamin Franklin. He published *The Pennsylvania Gazette* as "the foremost newspaper in the young American colonies" from 1729 through 1748. The *Gazette*, in Franklin's words, was intended to promulgate the

"freshest advices, foreign and domestic." In 1902 the University of Pennsylvania established *Old Penn* as its alumni tabloid, later adopted a magazine format, and in 1918 changed its name to *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. "University and alumni approval was widespread, and Philadelphia's newspapers bestowed editorial congratulations," writes alumnus Fred H. Stapleford in the September 1951 issue.

According to a historical summary of *The Pennsylvania Gazette,* the magazine during the first half of the 1900s seldom served as "a barometer of its epoch. One gets little sense of world affairs except in the narrow ways in which they impinge on University celebrations, enrollment, etc. The exception to this is the Letters section, wherein correspondence from China hints at some of what is taking place there in 1940.... But in general the *Gazette,* which had been turned over to the General Alumni Society in 1925 to centralize communication to alumni, maintained the aura of a club magazine" (Anthony A. Lyle, "*The Pennsylvania Gazette*: Since World War II," unpublished report, 1985).

Born in the same era, most of these early periodicals shared common traits. The alumni associations often were the publishers, and the editors usually were alumni directors who had little or no training in journalism. Their products showed it. Early magazines were "dull depositories of reports of meetings, lengthy accounts of graduates' trips up the Amazon, and reams of class and club notes," writes Williams in "The Unsinkable Alumni Magazine" (1979). In design, she says, they committed the "sin of sameness."

Alumni magazines enjoyed a long infancy. In the mid-20th century they were to enter adolescence, a struggle for identity and independence.

The Road to Respectability

After World War II, colleges and universities entered a new era. Interest in higher education soared when thousands of veterans returned home to pursue their interrupted dreams. As the federal government and U.S. industry increased their demand for university research, they awarded grants that provided short-term resources for campus expansions. But when short-term aid from external sources diminished, a long-term need remained — financial support from alumni whose interest in alma mater would be permanent and palpable, university administrators hoped.

To tap this source of support, colleges and universities initiated multimillion-dollar fund-raising campaigns and hired professionals in development and public relations to manage them. Recognizing the value of print communications in their mission, these officials enlisted professional journalists to produce alumni periodicals, including magazines. Editors gained larger budgets and greater amounts of editorial freedom. University magazines accelerated their progress on the road to respectability.

The circuitous path of progress was paved with the talent and tenacity of editors like Corbin Gwaltney of The Johns Hopkins University, now editor of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. As editor of *Johns Hopkins Magazine* from 1950-59, Gwaltney saw freedom as a "chance to escape the parochialism endemic to alumni magazines — to mine Johns Hopkins' intellectual resources and to translate that into thoughtful, provocative journalism," noted an editor of *The*

Nation (Charles M. Helmken, "30 on Thirty Editors and [More], *Creative Writing and Editing*, 1979).

"When Corbin Gwaltney entered the profession in the early '50s, alumni magazines started their great revolution," says Robert M. "Dusty" Rhodes, editor of the *Brown Alumni Monthly* and then a new editor at the University of Arkansas. "His magazines of the '50s would stand up well today. Forty years ago, almost all alumni magazines were a collection of news notes, a lot of sports items, and lots of class notes and alumni news. Few magazines made any attempt at feature material. But Corbin brought good writing and good photography to his magazine. The *Johns Hopkins Magazine* was like a college version of *Life*" (interview with Rhodes, 1989).

To improve the genre, Gwaltney "started preaching the gospel through speeches at various institutions," Rhodes says. "I recall going to one seminar in Oklahoma, where other magazine editors and I spent a week at the feet of the master. And I came home and told my wife, 'I now know what I want to do with the rest of my life.'" Rhodes himself became a pacesetter in magazine publishing — at the University of Arkansas, Lehigh University, the University of Pennsylvania, and now at Brown.

By 1951, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, as described by a former managing editor, reflected a philosophy that marked its emergence as a leader in alumni publishing: "By and large, the *Gazette*, as a mature, well-established alumni organ, today adheres to ... the vital device of presenting facts, uncolored, uncensored, and objective, which allow Pennsylvania's alumni to judge for themselves how well the University is discharging today's momentous obligations" (Lyle, 1985).

Another pioneer of the 1950s who devoted his life to innovation was the late Charles Michael Helmken, then of the American Alumni Council, which merged with the American College Public Relations Association to become the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). Helmken was a forward-looking editor-designer who led workshops and seminars to increase professionalism nationwide. As a CASE vice president, he continued innovating and inspiring until his death in 1989.

Professionals such as these were developing a higher status for alumni magazines — in part the result of a new awareness of the growing role that college and university graduates would be expected to play in American higher education. More and more, colleges and universities would be calling upon students of the past to serve as stewards of education for the future. To assume that role with any degree of effectiveness, alumni would have to be well-informed about higher education in general and their alma mater in particular.

In the commercial magazine world, by the mid-20th century, another revolution was occurring — the rise of "specialized magazines, aimed at readers with specialized interests that could not be satisfied in a general publication," writes historian Darwin Payne ("The Age of Mass Magazines 1900-Present," *The Media in America: A History*, 1990).

"Behind this heady boom in special-audience magazines is a stark and dolorous fact of publishing life: The day of the 'mass' magazines, or at least the mass magazine as we have long known it, has passed," according to a special report in *Business Week* magazine (May 2, 1970). "Spiraling production costs have caught up with it. The nation's higher educational levels and growing multiplicity of

interests have caught up with it. And, of course, television has not only caught up with it but surpassed it."

Among the specialized magazines growing in importance was the alumni magazine. Its specialization: "the college-educated mind" (Williams, "The Unsinkable Alumni Magazine," 1979).

Yet inconsistencies in quality continued to diminish the alumni magazine as a serious voice for higher education. In *Magazines for the Millions: The Story of Specialized Publications* (1969), author James L.C. Ford gives alumni magazines only scant attention (three pages) and reveals his low regard for them: "Colleges spend a lot of money on fancy alumni magazines, inspired in large part with the hope that it will return to them, bread on the waters, as lavish grants for foundations or athletic stadia. As a means to this end — and maintaining the old college spirit — alumni associations across the land produce publications for the old grad."

His characterization was unfair and uninformed with regard to some college and university magazines, especially those that would find their mission challenged and ultimately changed during the turbulence of the decades ahead.

The Spirit of the Sixties

Another great revolution in alumni magazines occurred in the '60s, according to Rhodes. "In the early years of the decade, Columbia University's magazine, under George Keller, became one of the first to do a complete job of covering what was happening on campus. Columbia, in the heart of New York City, was more prone to being a center for activists than some other institutions. Keller reported on all the student movements. He wrote about the SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] before most people knew what it was. On other college campuses, if editors did not write about the student movement and there was a real blow-out, alumni would be totally unprepared for it."

College and university magazine editors owe much of the freedom they have today to the students of the '60s, Rhodes adds. "It was not until student movements got into high gear that people would talk openly about what was wrong in higher education. Because of the student movements, these problems became topics of discussion in the national media. Once that door was opened, it was very hard for a major institution to tell its editor, 'You can't cover this.' When the University of Pennsylvania had its first sit-in, there was never any question in my mind that we would cover it. For one thing, it was blasted all over the Philadelphia papers."

The sixties unleashed a "heightened spirit of editorial freedom," according to Helmken. Among the other editors who advanced the cause of freedom was Randy Fort at Emory University, who "candidly reported the issue of segregation in the schools...." Later in the decade, Andy Pierovich at the University of California at Berkeley was among other editors "called upon by the force of events on their campuses to demonstrate great courage" (Helmken, "30 on Thirty Editors and [More]," 1979).

Institutions of higher education did not easily or quickly embrace this new openness, however. When Robert Reichley was the editor at Brown, he reported

on a walk-out of black students, "and he took a lot of flak over it," Rhodes says. "The approach was to 'shoot the messenger.'" Some alumni editors paid a high price for adhering to their principles: They were fired or they quit in protest.

Not only did magazine editors become more courageous in determining content during this era, but their publications became bolder in design. The trendsetters included Robert Sibley at the University of California at Berkeley, who "championed the cause of fine design." Johns Hopkins University and Washington University in St. Louis were pioneers in incorporating strong photojournalism. Simmons College often experimented with new visual approaches in its periodicals (Helmken, "Speaking the Visual Language," *Communicating With Alumni*, 1979).

Helmken's leadership in opening new vistas for magazines speaks for itself: "We are word people existing in a world experiencing a visual revolution that was born with the photograph, grew with the motion picture, and reached puberty through the television screen. Educators, administrators, and editors struggle with the limitations of words as they try to communicate with the increasing numbers of visually sophisticated people. The world outside academe more readily accepts, understands, and invests in dynamic visual communication. This world of 'marketing' and 'hard sell' produces the plethora of print that competes in the home with your alumni periodical and promotional pieces" (Helmken, "Speaking the Visual Language," 1979).

Mixed Media

In the 1970s, rising production costs and budgetary cutbacks threatened to retard the development of the alumni magazine. Many institutions converted to tabloids, newspapers, and newsletters. The results often were as mixed as the type of formats adopted. Some institutions successfully adapted the content and design of magazines to "magapapers" — periodicals with a magazine-like cover opening into a tabloid. For many, however, something was lost in the translation. Thoughtful, in-depth features often were replaced with sketchy and isolated news briefs. With this transition, many periodicals succeeded only in achieving the status of "throwaway." Administrators who believed that such conversions saved their institutions money on printing and paper might well have asked themselves, "At what price?"

Editorial freedom remained an issue in the '70s. In the early 20th century, English poet laureate John Masefield wrote in "The University" that institutions of higher education are "places where those who hate ignorance may strive to know, where those who perceive truth may strive to make others see...." In the 1970s, editors noted the irony of this sentiment as they faced the question of how much openness their own colleges and universities would allow in their magazines.

By the end of the '70s, in spite of the progress of the previous two decades, alumni magazines remained a mixed lot, uneven in quality and underdeveloped as effective vehicles of communication. Williams describes the state of the art in 1979:

> Out of the more than one thousand alumni magazines now published, about one hundred are well done and about a dozen rank with the best publishing in the country.... Many editors are simply not professionally

> equipped to handle their jobs. Too often the magazines are edited on a part-time basis by public relations or fund-raising staff members who regard the magazines as house organs rather than as free alumni periodicals. They abuse the purpose of these magazines by packing them with fund-raising materials. Unfortunately, they fail to see that the quality of their magazines demonstrates the worth of their institutions ("The Unsinkable Alumni Magazine," 1979).

In the 1980s, new alumni magazines appeared, and some others underwent dramatic transformations in quality — usually a reflection of a university's desire to seek a higher profile academically. An article I wrote for CURRENTS in 1988 documents new or upgraded magazines at the University of Pittsburgh; Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; Rice University; Southern Methodist University; Duke University; the University of Portland; and George Mason University, among others. "George Mason has changed greatly over the last eight years," Helen Ackerman, director of university relations, says in the article. George Mason adopted a magazine format "to reflect the university's growing quality and sophistication" (LaSalle, "The Move to Magazine," April 1988).

A master's thesis by Donna Shoemaker, editor of the Alumni Magazine Consortium, suggests a relationship between the quality of an institution and the quality of its alumni publishing. Based on her national survey of 506 professionals, she concludes: "The most academically competitive institutions tended to publish magazines, to devote more resources to the periodical, and to include more substantive content" (Shoemaker, "Alumni Periodical Goals, Resources, and Quality: A Study of the Perceptions of Campus Editors, Alumni Professionals, and Journalism Educators," 1988).

Rhodes also has observed a drive toward distinction among increasing numbers of alumni magazines: "During the 1970s Harvard and Brown dominated the Sibley competition [the CASE award for the best college or university magazine]," he says. "It was a kind of closed corporation. In those days you could almost automatically pick the Sibley winner from about a half dozen magazines. But today even the most vain editor cannot make a prediction. There are about 20 magazines that you would not be surprised to see as a winner. Some of the older magazines are in the second tier now. It is as if more university administrators have realized the importance of having a fine magazine for alumni" (Rhodes interview, 1989).

Recently that realization has been embraced abroad by one of the oldest universities in the world. When in 1988 the University of Oxford launched a major fund-raising drive, the "Campaign for Oxford," it also initiated its first alumni magazine, *Oxford Today*. Handsome in design and substantive in content, the magazine is sent free to more than 100,000 alumni. "I am very glad that, after 800 years, Oxford is to join most other universities of the world and have a magazine going to all its alumni," writes Oxford Chancellor Lord Jenkins of Hillhead in the first issue. "*Oxford Today* will undoubtedly fill a gap, for ... the University as such has never done very much to bind its graduates to it or to inform them of its remarkable achievements." In the same issue, the university's vice chancellor speaks frankly about finances: "We will not conceal our anxieties for the future or

forbear to mention the reasons why it has become imperative for Oxford to seek a large increase in its endowment through the Campaign for Oxford...."

While institutions in the Old World introduce publications for alumni, some colleges and universities in the New World experiment with video magazines, an innovation that may represent the next stage in the development of alumni magazines. Some pundits have predicted that the magazine of the future will contain a video disk bound into its center spread — a disk that would bring to the home screen a major university event, alumni meeting, lecture, or performance. "Publications" of the future might exist in the form of "videomags" resembling the format of television's *Sixty Minutes*.

Rhodes says he does not foresee that videos will replace print magazines, however. "A magazine as a medium can be picked up any time during the day, any place. It can attract you over and over and you can go back to it again and again. The value of an alumni magazine sitting on a coffee table should not be underestimated." Indeed, some observers note an increase in the number of specialized magazines being published by specific schools, such as business or medicine, within a university. A national study is needed to examine this possible trend, as well as to document the precise number of college, university, and research magazines being published today.

In the 1990s, higher education finds itself in another era of fiscal restraint, caused by declining enrollments, cutbacks in government appropriations, regional recessions, tax reform that is less friendly in its treatment of philanthropy, and increased competition for private funding. In this environment, perhaps the next "big story" for truth-telling editors to cover will be that of money itself. In recent years, several well-established institutions — including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, and Stanford — have announced staff or other cost cutbacks. A 1989 issue of *Johns Hopkins Magazine* devoted nine pages to a special report on a five-year plan to improve the financial health of the university. In an introductory note, interim editor Alan Sea speaks of cuts affecting the magazine and the challenge to "report honestly and fairly on something as controversial within the institution as the five-year plan." But he reaffirms the magazine's mission, saying: "Thankfully, the university's administration and faculty have recognized that alumni and friends will think better of the institution if its magazine is free to be objective and frank. More important, they have recognized that you are entitled to such a magazine." Editor Elise Hancock says that the magazine will continue to report fully on financial issues affecting Johns Hopkins University.

Across the ocean, after a year of publishing its new magazine, Oxford University continued to report on finances: "Although this magazine is not directly concerned with fund raising, it seemed appropriate to include in this issue an article clarifying the financial relationship between the University and the colleges," writes editor Christina Hardyment. (Oxford University comprises more than 30 separate and competing colleges, all with their own administrations.) "In a small space, by no means all questions can be answered, but there could be no better place to open up a debate about the nature of Oxford's financial situation than in our own magazine."

As the 1990s begin, there is every indication that alumni magazines will continue to mature both in substance and style. Through workshops and publications, organizations such as CASE help to improve both the skills of editors and the

sophistication of university administrators in understanding the important role played by high-quality magazines in information-giving and image-making. The competition for attention in the marketplace of ideas is increasing. Savvy administrators are learning that only quality in content and design can push their communications through the plethora of messages struggling for readership among audiences inundated with printed materials. As Rhodes says, "I have never understood why a fine institution would publish a poor publication. It may be the one thing that alumni or donors have as a representation of that institution, and its quality or lack of it says a lot about the worth of that institution."

Freedom and funding, however, will continue to challenge institutions and editors, even those with the loftiest of goals and the best of intentions.

Chapter 2

The Magazine's Role: From Information-giving To Image-building

Discussing the role of a college or university magazine may appear to be an academic exercise — everyone knows that the role of such a periodical is to convey information about a college or university to its alumni. Especially in today's complex and competitive environment, however, that characterization seems simplistic. The roles, like the times, are changing.

In 1979, former Simmons College editor Dorothy F. Williams documented the growing numbers of alumni periodicals — an indication of higher education's recognition of the need to reach out systematically to its important constituencies. "By one estimate," Williams wrote in 1979, "2,000 alumni periodicals might be reaching 20 million educated Americans." Viewed primarily as information-giving vehicles, many of these periodicals contained primarily news about an institution and its alumni that college and university editors judged would be of interest to those graduates ("The Unsinkable Alumni Magazine," 1979). Today, most colleges and universities take advantage of the opportunity to tell their stories through at least one newsletter, tabloid, or magazine. Many larger institutions also publish specialized periodicals for audiences such as medical or law school graduates, or magazines highlighting research campuswide.

But the growing use of the term "college or university magazine" signals a departure from the traditional notion of "alumni magazine." This shifting of nomenclature implies that the role of such magazines lies beyond the obvious. Magazines once intended primarily for alumni, it seems, also can be other things to other people. Increasingly, institutions are adding audiences such as parents, prospective students, high school counselors, and local and national leaders to their magazine mailing lists. Even to the traditional alumni audience, magazines can represent more than a vehicle for the one-sided recitation of institutional news and needs. (Some of the best

magazines, for instance, retain "alumni" in their titles, but clearly have a more expansive approach to content. Examples include the *Brown Alumni Monthly* and the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*.) In addition, the role of university magazines may change as the institutions they represent evolve, either because of internal factors, such as a redefinition of mission, or external forces, such as increased competition for recognition in the marketplace of messages.

The Medium as Message

First, the magazine medium itself sends a message. "More and more college editors are deciding that the medium *is* a large part of the message — and that the magazine medium is the best way to present both the image and the information necessary to promote their institutions," I wrote in a CURRENTS article. "Although tabloids and similar formats are often faster, cheaper, and easier to produce than magazines, the difference that extra time, money, and effort make is precisely what gives magazines their higher status" ("The Move to Magazine," April 1988).

Editors who have adopted a magazine format say they believe that magazines lend their messages both impact and permanence. "People are less likely to toss out a slick magazine than a newspaper," says Cynthia Stowell, formerly of Portland State University, in the CURRENTS article. "Magazines at least get glanced at," adds Jay Rochlin, editor of *Arizona Alumnus* at the University of Arizona. "Tabs don't even make it in the door. When we changed [to a magazine] we got several notes from alumni thanking us for *beginning* to send them our publication. These people had been receiving the tabloid for years but didn't even know it."

A magazine format may sacrifice timeliness in content — it's more difficult to publish a quick turnaround, last-minute report on a recent campus development, for example. But what magazines lose in timeliness they gain in timelessness. Magazine content can put campus developments within a context that transcends a particular institution. Trends can be reported, and actions can be analyzed in terms of the larger issues they represent.

When Southern Methodist University in Dallas suffered a football scandal in 1987, campus editors knew that the quarterly university magazine could not be produced quickly enough to give alumni much-needed updates of information and, in some cases, clarifications of incomplete reports in the daily media. As a result, university editors decided to give alumni up-to-the-minute coverage through special bulletins. The university used its quarterly magazine to report on student and faculty debates and protests over the role of intercollegiate athletics at the institution, alternative approaches to the situation, reforms being instituted, and the national picture of intercollegiate athletics with regard to higher education values and institutional integrity. Nationally, these issues did not disappear with the fading of one institution's crisis. SMU alumni, through their magazine's focus on the "big picture," learned not only the particulars of their own institution's struggle, but the larger issues facing all of higher education.

Because magazines tend to have a longer shelf-life (or usually coffee-table life) they often provide high visibility for the sponsoring institution. With increased visibility,

however, comes added responsibility. Because magazines are more likely to be kept by readers, "the content must be able to withstand the test of time," says Andrew W. M. Beierle, editor of one that certainly passes the test, *Emory Magazine* ("Publications and Periodicals," *Handbook for Alumni Administration*, 1989).

Magazines offer higher reproduction quality, with sharper color and slicker paper, as well as a more manageable size. These factors enable university magazines to enjoy prestige by association — most popular consumer periodicals also come in magazine format (LaSalle, April 1988).

The prestige-by-association factor also relates to the type of institutions that publish magazines. In her 1988 thesis on alumni periodicals, Donna Shoemaker, editor of the Alumni Magazine Consortium, says that of the 506 campus editors, alumni staff members, and journalism educators she surveyed, 50 percent report that their institutions publish magazines; 34 percent say their colleges or universities produce tabloids. Less than 9 percent indicate that their institutions publish newsletters for the alumni population.

Even more telling than this quantitative profile, however, is a qualitative factor: the type of institution that is most likely to publish a magazine. "The magazine emerges clearly as the first choice in this sample for institutions that are ranked as competitive and above: Almost three times as many in the highly/very competitive rank publish magazines as compared with tabloids," Shoemaker reports. "Less competitive institutions favored tabloids over magazines and published the highest percentage of newsletters" (Shoemaker, "Alumni Periodical Goals, Resources, and Quality: A Study of the Perceptions of Campus Editors, Alumni Professionals, and Journalism Educators," 1988).

Communicators of Quality

A college or university magazine can communicate quality, not only of the institution, but of its alumni. Because the magazine format accommodates longer, more thoughtful features, an institution choosing this vehicle is making a statement about its graduates: that they continue to be intellectually curious individuals who will invest their time in reading substantive articles that reflect the expertise of the college or university, focus on societal issues that affect higher education, and highlight research advancements that will have an impact on society.

"Looking at content in terms of the academic ranking of the institutions provided evidence that the more competitive institutions favored features, while the less competitive ones favored news of the institution," Shoemaker reports. "There is some support for the hypothesis that academic institutions of higher quality will include more feature articles and news articles than development/alumni relations news. The more competitive institutions seemed to be making an attempt to present themselves through more substantive articles than through straight news stories." Institutions with strong academic profiles, however, "may not feel the need to promote the institution as directly as may some institutions still seeking adequate levels of alumni involvement," she adds.

This conclusion is supported — and an interesting paradox is revealed — by my 1976 study of alumni publishing practices at 180 private, four-year, liberal arts colleges with enrollments below 2,500 and with relatively low admission standards — those identified as "invisible colleges" by education researchers Alexander W. Astin and Calvin B.T. Lee in *Invisible Colleges: A Profile of Small Private Colleges with Limited Resources* (1972). Surprisingly, most of these colleges published magazines (38 percent), followed by tabloids (35 percent). Yet few of the magazines contained feature content. The predominant type of content — short news items *about* the institution — was the least likely to generate genuine understanding and appreciation of the colleges' special challenges and needs.

Of 13 content priorities, editors listed these categories last: "articles about scholarly research by faculty," "articles about issues in higher education," "articles for continued reader education," and "articles discussing national or world issues."

A content analysis of the periodicals themselves revealed that articles appearing most often focused on news about the institution, alumni accomplishments (including class notes), and alumni association events. Few and far between were engaging or provocative feature articles that would enable alumni to continue to feel a part of the institution's educational mission — and ultimately to share in the promotion of its aspirations.

These institutions misdirected their resources into magazine formats that fell short on magazine content. The fact that editors at these institutions often assumed many other advancement roles may indicate that time, rather than talent, was the chief roadblock to quality. But the paradox remains: Those colleges most in need of thoughtful and creative communication vehicles were the ones least likely to possess them (LaSalle-Alberger, "Alumni Publishing in Small Private Colleges with Limited Resources," 1976).

Nothing will promote the worth of an institution more persuasively to potential donors and alumni volunteers than features that show — rather than promotional announcements that tell — the institution's academic quality and vitality. In this way, the education enterprise speaks for itself. Magazines that do not contain feature content sell their institutions and their readers short. A slick and colorful magazine cover wrapped around content better suited to a newsletter — short, quick-read items, events listings, and calendars — betrays its purpose and wastes its institution's money.

The beauty of the magazine format is that it can accommodate many types of content. "Magazine" by definition means a "place of storage." In publishing, a magazine should be a storehouse of ideas and information. Well-defined sections can present copy ranging from brief news articles and announcements to fully developed features. Just as popular commercial magazines and newspapers publish various departments with short news items appealing to specific interests, comprehensive university magazines often include class notes listings, alumni events, and institutional news briefs. But if such content dominates, rather than supplements, more substantive articles, then the "storehouse" is built upon a faulty foundation.

Magazines are not guaranteed to be successful because of format alone. They require a skilled and knowledgeable editor who is able to "combine the editorial

and design elements into a harmonious whole," says Beierle (1989). Magazines become communicators of quality only if substance and style work in tandem.

Even with a history of progress in the quality of college and university magazines, many fail to stand up against the commercial magazines with which they compete for reader attention. Shoemaker's study asked respondents to compare alumni periodicals they received with the best general-interest magazines. Of more than 400 respondents, only 7 percent rated their periodicals as being of higher quality than most outside magazines; 26 percent rated quality as about the same; and 60 percent said they found the alumni periodicals they receive to be of lower quality.

Shoemaker reports: "A question soliciting their opinion of which one element best indicates that an alumni periodical is excellent prompted a flurry of editorial comments — and a relatively clear consensus — that overall, the content ... best sent the message of excellence" (1988).

Strengths and weaknesses in both content and graphics gain the attention of professionals who judge the highly competitive magazine categories in CASE's Recognition Program. "The best of the entries ... did virtually leap out at the judges," they said of the 1988 winners. "They supplied material of interest to alumni *and* [emphasis theirs] to readers who may not have any direct ties to the college or university. Their editors showed a willingness to 'take chances,' both graphically and in content terms. While they contained a bland mix of articles on current developments and activities, reminiscences, individual careers and accomplishments, and occasional contributions by present-day students, they also dealt frankly with the problems and opportunities that affect today's colleges and universities, with interesting, penetrating, new ideas and issues...." (Report of the Judges, University Magazine Category, CASE Recognition Program, 1988).

On the other hand, judges found that the weaker magazines ran articles and features that "were rarely, if ever, substantive, that lacked snap and clarity, that contained formula copy and formula pictures and illustrations. There was a ponderous quality to the prose, which often rambled, and pictures of groups standing in rows, people shaking hands and exchanging checks and documents, and lifeless mug shots.... Articles did not quickly capture the reader's attention, intertwining documentation, authority and facts throughout the body and leading to a conclusion.... The weakest [magazines] demonstrate that their editors need to reconsider the old question: 'Why are we doing this?'"

Information, Please

Indeed, why *are* we doing this?

In Shoemaker's survey, most respondents said that a periodical's most important goal was keeping readers informed about the institution. This objective was followed closely by these two goals: keeping classmates in touch and highlighting the institution's success stories.

Periodicals keep readers informed through features, essays, and news articles. These elements also can be used to highlight the institution's success stories, although balance and objectivity should not be sacrificed in the process.

Content that helps to keep classmates in touch derives from the earliest days of alumni publishing and falls into two types:

1. Content that keeps classmates in touch *with each other* usually consists of class notes — brief items organized by class year that report career and civic achievements and personal news such as marriages, births, travel, and so on.

2. Content aimed at keeping alumni in touch *with the institution* includes sections reporting on programs and events for alumni participation, such as reunions, club or regional activities, and volunteer opportunities to recruit students or provide career advice. Of course, magazines that contain only this type of content, and lack substantive news and feature articles, fail to keep their alumni in touch with the heart and soul of their alma mater.

Historically, alumni sections have appeared in the "back of the book," but some magazines, such as Duke University's, now publish alumni news in the middle of the publication. Duke calls this section the "Duke Alumni Register" and prints it on a different-colored stock; in essence, it serves as an alumni newsletter within a university magazine.

Some magazines consist only of features; class notes and news of alumni activities appear in supplemental tabloids or newsletters. Many editors, however, view the traditional class notes section of their magazines as the "hook" that will lure readers into the magazine and on to other sections.

When *Johns Hopkins Magazine* dropped its class notes section because many alumni sent their news items to the magazine or newsletter of the individual school they attended, the resulting letters to the editor recorded a common complaint: "I had friends in the other schools ... and am interested in the careers and successes of all alumni, young and old," one alumnus wrote. "At a time when major efforts are being made to get all of the departments in all of the schools to pull together, it certainly seems counterproductive to adopt a parochial attitude and not keep everyone informed of the doings of all graduates," another said. *Johns Hopkins Magazine* has reinstated its class notes section.

"Never underestimate the practical value of class notes as a source of potentially useful information," writes Nancy Smith in *Creative Writing and Editing*. "They represent one of the most tangible links between alumni and the institution and often serve as the only channel for information into the development or alumni records offices. Amidst the ephemera, you can find nuggets of pure gold" ("In Defense of Class Notes," 1979).

Some magazine editors, however, seem to regard alumni news sections as second-class citizens. Those that are poorly edited and blandly presented drew criticism from judges in the 1991 CASE Recognition Program. "These departments are treated like garbage," one judge says, "even when they're the most popular sections in a magazine" (Report of the Judges, University Magazine Category, CASE National Recognition Program, 1991).

An Extension of Education

A survey of 22 magazines receiving CASE recognition awards in recent years also reflects the high priority accorded to the information-giving and keeping-in-touch

roles of college and university magazines. Asked to describe the roles of their magazines, however, many editors also reveal nuances that attest to the evolution of "alumni magazine" to "college or university magazine." In response to the survey, Robert Bliwise, editor of Duke University's magazine, says: "In the inaugural issue ... the editors specified the goal of making the magazine a vehicle for continuing education — offering substantive and provocative treatment of compelling topics, delivering a consistently strong visual impact, and remaining faithful to representing the University as a place of (sometimes competing) ideas."

Goals listed by other editors included:

1. "To share the ongoing intellectual adventure of the university with our alumni and friends. To tell their stories, as well as our own, in the context of issues of contemporary concern" (University of Pittsburgh).
2. "To be a provocative source of news and information about the university. We are especially committed to 'issue-oriented' stories that reach beyond the university, yet are related to the university" (Boise State University).
3. "To portray the intellectual vitality — the exchange of ideas, the inquiring minds, the diversity of expertise — present in this comprehensive university; to keep alumni and other readers candidly informed about developments in all aspects of University life and the achievements of alumni; to help alumni and other readers to view the university as a source of continued learning in their lives" (Southern Methodist University).
4. "To publish articles on issues of interest to the readers. These usually include features, commentaries, analyses, essays, book reviews, and poems. Ours is a comprehensive magazine of general interest" (Howard University).

The mission statement of *Notre Dame Magazine* eloquently expresses a goal uniquely suited to — yet transcending — the institution: "*Notre Dame Magazine* is the periodical of a university that is striving to achieve academic distinction while maintaining its roots in the Roman Catholic tradition. The magazine is catholic in scope and Catholic in viewpoint, and it seeks to provide continuing education ... by examining issues relating to public affairs and personal lifestyles; to articulate the Christian and humanistic values which Notre Dame professes to uphold; to inform the university's constituencies of significant campus events and trends; to portray the life of the campus; to celebrate the achievements, examine the difficulties and report the views of Notre Dame people whose stories might offer significant lessons to others; and to accomplish the traditional objectives of an alumni magazine by furnishing news of Notre Dame classes and clubs."

One trend is evident in these stated goals: The magazines view themselves as extensions of the academic enterprise, a role that keeps alumni in touch with the university not merely through news of events but through the exchange of ideas that forms the core of education. In this way, magazines can boost alumni pride, not through overt promotion, but with the communication of quality through substantive content. Also, in this way, a magazine becomes a source of knowledge for readers as they face complex societal and ethical issues every day.

The continuing education role is growing in importance among top university magazines. In Shoemaker's survey, respondents ranked as number four the goal of offering "a wide diversity of articles and viewpoints [which continue the] education

of alumni." In addition, she found significant agreement on the importance of a magazine's role in continuing education when she compared responses across the professions surveyed: 79 percent of the alumni professionals considered that goal to be very or somewhat important, as did 73 percent of the editors and 69 percent of the journalism educators.

Unfortunately, not all university magazines as yet manifest a commitment to substantive communication.

"A lot of editors have the feeling that they must ballyhoo the institution on every page instead of letting it speak for itself through its deeds," says *Brown Alumni Monthly* Editor Robert "Dusty" Rhodes in a CURRENTS article (Walton R. Collins, "What's Wrong with Alumni Periodicals," June 1985).

In some cases an alumni magazine becomes "more a creature of the institution's ego than a vehicle for generating alumni interest," says MIT's *Technology Review* Editor John I. Mattill in the same article. "This is not to say that an alumni magazine should not present its institution's successes. Nor do I think editors should spend every moment seeking the institution's weaknesses and penetrating the armor that surrounds them. The problem is simply to be a good journalist: to represent and appeal to the readers' presumed interests."

"No one who has attended an institution for four years comes away believing that everything the institution does is absolutely first-rate," says Brown in the article. "To be told in the pages of the alumni magazine, issue after issue, that everything is wonderful and there are no problems — that's just unbelievable. Cover your institution as honestly as you can."

A 1988 readership survey of *Johns Hopkins Magazine* revealed that readers respect objectivity, according to Shoemaker's thesis on alumni magazines. In the Hopkins survey, 60 percent of respondents said they usually read at least half of the magazine; 57 percent rated it as "excellent" and 30 percent "good." "Interestingly, those who give the magazine higher marks are more likely to see it as an objective source of information, not one that presents only the university's position," according to the survey summary. Shoemaker reports: The "telephone survey also uncovered considerably more support for articles tackling global issues than for those centered on the university, and more interest in features than departments."

The Fight for Freedom

The issue of objectivity, of course, is linked with the issue of freedom: How free do editors feel to report "the bad with the good"?

To assess the issue of editorial freedom, David A. Fryxell, former executive editor of *Pitt Magazine*, sent a four-page survey to 115 CASE periodicals editors; he achieved a 55 percent response rate. Respondents answered the question: "How would you rate the degree of freedom that you enjoy as a campus editor?" as follows: 27 percent said they have "absolute" freedom; 67 percent "significant" freedom; and 7 percent "some" freedom. No one claimed to have "no freedom," compared with 18 percent in a similar survey in 1981. At a discussion of the findings

during the 1990 CASE Writing Institute, editors and writers agreed that editorial freedom had grown during the 1980s.

An unmeasured element in the issue of freedom, however, is self-censorship. Knowing (or believing that they know) what the administration will bear, how many editors flatten the reporting in their magazines to avoid risking official censorship or their jobs? The question deserves further study. "Many editors don't test the limits," says George Keller in a CURRENTS article on editorial freedom. "They assume they don't have the right to do so." Keller exercised that right during the late 1960s, as award-winning editor of *Columbia* magazine, which fully covered student uprisings. Administrators "were proud of the awards I won but wished I hadn't opened issues as frankly as I had," says Keller, now senior fellow and chair of the Program of Higher Education, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education. "I was also called a traitor to my own institution by a few editors" (Marshall A. Ledger, "Who's in Charge Here?" CURRENTS, March 1987).

"Self-censorship is the major burden we carry, other than direct oversight and supervision," says one editor in Fryxell's survey. Adds another: "Maybe proven self-censors are given free rein because their bosses are confident that 'the horse knows the way.'"

Asked to define "editorial freedom," the editors in Fryxell's study reveal a consensus that freedom is an ideal often tempered by the institutional sponsorship of college and university magazines. To various respondents, "editorial freedom" means:

1. Letting editors edit.

- "The ability to choose what does or does not go into the magazine. The freedom to approach topics from any point of view."
- "Freedom to pick and choose topics, consulting with deans and immediate supervisor at times, and responsibility for all copy and graphics. Make our own mistakes and be responsible for them."

2. Using professionalism.

- "The freedom to apply journalistic standards, to use one's professional judgment and to draw upon one's knowledge of the institution to report and interpret university developments in a balanced and accurate manner."
- "The freedom to draw from your own sense of appropriateness based on experience and training and trustworthiness — i.e., professionalism."

3. Reporting good news and bad news.

- "The freedom to responsibly cover the bad news as well as the good... a lack of pressure to present an unbelievable, always rosy picture of your university." Another editor adds: "One of these days they're going to tar and feather me and ride me out of town on a rail. In the meantime, however, I've enjoyed more than 20 years of essentially total editorial freedom. We tweak the university's nose from time to time, when it seems to call for tweaking. By and large, my impression is that most of our readers rather enjoy that."

4. Doing your job.

- Making an effort "to let my boss know that I understand his concerns. While I would approach my work in a professionally honest manner, I also would willingly send up a red flag on a potentially sensitive article and keep him informed of the magazine's contents. As a result, I do believe I've earned his trust and respect as an editor."

• Being "sophisticated enough to provide good stuff which does not harm the institution. If the institution doesn't trust the editor, it should find a new one."

• The ability to build credibility. "Although I acknowledge that the 'cream' of campus magazines print their share of 'bad news,' the fact that promoting the institution is at least one purpose of every such publication alters the meaning of editorial freedom.... Building credibility with readers is the goal of editorial freedom."

Is editorial freedom for college and university magazines different from that enjoyed by other magazines? "Alumni magazine editors are constrained by the purpose and nature of their publications," answers one editor. "If you really want to re-create a *Rolling Stone*, you probably ought to look for other employment — although alumni mags deserve the same energy, wit and flash as any of their slicker, hipper, costlier cousins of the newsstands."

Another editor reflects upon the influence of campus sources as a factor affecting freedom: "The people we need to be able to go back to are right here on campus. Therefore, if annoyed, they can get at us more easily. But I don't think our problems are different in kind from those of a 'real' editor. You show me a journalist who says he has never shaded a story to please a source and I'll show you a liar. I do not think we are 'free' to savage the institution, or to run gratuitous bad news."

In a survey of 22 award-winning college and university editors conducted for this monograph, 21 of them say they believe they enjoy a reasonable amount of editorial freedom. "Our magazine content is based upon reader interest; our journalistic instincts carry weight," says one editor. "We are rarely told what to do," says another. "Rather, if a sensitive issue is to be dealt with, we discuss the ramifications of various editorial approaches." One editor reports, however, that he has been challenged twice about covering drug use on campus, and the administration "made me cut back on our coverage of gays." As a result, "I tackle [controversies] less and less fully than 20 years ago."

The high degree of editorial freedom reported by most of the 22 survey respondents may not be representative of college and university magazines in general, however. The editors of these magazines exhibit high standards of professionalism and have won CASE awards for their efforts, factors that tend to increase administrators' confidence in their work. The fact that they have been given the resources to achieve excellence also indicates that these magazines enjoy high levels of support from their institutions.

Many of the respondents work for established and prestigious institutions who may be less fearful of the impact of "negative news" on their alumni than younger, less confident colleges and universities may be. And many of the magazines have a long tradition of forthright reporting established by earlier editors who have set the stage for their successors. When Rhodes fully covered student demonstrations at the University of Pennsylvania as editor of *The Pennsylvania Gazette* in the 1960s, "nobody ever said no," he recalls in a CURRENTS article. "I'm not sure I set out to achieve any authority — I just did what my journalistic sense told me I should do" (Ledger, March 1987). The tradition continues.

As magazine editors such as these won both respect and recognition for their work, and as they preached the gospel of good reporting at conferences and

seminars throughout the nation, they served as role models for less-established editors who were still testing their wings of freedom.

Another factor that influences editorial freedom is administrative support for it. When one university's football team was placed on probation in the 1970s, the editor was "not allowed" by the administration to report the action in the university's magazine. Two years later, when a second probation was invoked, the magazine fully reported the situation. The difference? The arrival of a new vice president for development who had been trained at Brown University and a new editor who had been influenced by the journalistic standards established at institutions such as Columbia and Pennsylvania. The vice president simply expected that the news would be reported, and the editor never doubted her authority to do so.

Even under the same editor, editorial freedom tends to be a product of evolution. In 1983 Beierle ran an article in *Emory Magazine* about a scientist who had fabricated research data. In a CURRENTS article, he says that he believes a similar story could not have been published two years earlier, when the magazine's staff and direction were still establishing themselves (Ledger, March 1987).

In *Power of the Presidency,* James L. Fisher, former president of Towson State College and later of CASE, urges higher education administrators to embrace editorial freedom: "A wise president communicates honestly and completely with alumni, even if the news isn't always popular.... [A]n unfettered alumni press inspired by a dynamic president will, in any case, yield better results than a restricted editor putting out what amounts to a tired house organ — such censorship is always obvious" (1984).

One president expressed measured support for freedom when he wrote a letter complimenting his university's editor for a recent issue of the magazine reporting on political activism on campus: "A good alumni magazine should not regurgitate press releases or bland renditions of what a university thinks it is. Neither should it reflect the zeal of investigating reporters seeking scandal and the rewards associated with revelation. You achieved an excellent balance reflecting stability and challenge that is the essence of a mature university community."

In a survey of 16 chief advancement officers for this monograph, most indicated that they play a marginal role in the oversight of their college or university magazine. Some occasionally suggest article ideas, only two approve final content before publication, and most see editorial copy only after publication. Again, these officers supervise editors who publish award-winning magazines.

The nature of education itself is the best argument for the right to cover campus controversy, and university administrators, of all people, ought to embrace this perspective. A university shows "its enduring strength as it goes about its work while continuously reassessing its proper roles, re-examining its mission, and critically analyzing its actions," SMU Provost Ruth P. Morgan reminded alumni in an essay published in a university magazine issue reporting on a campus controversy. "A university loses its balance, direction, and effectiveness only when it fails to recognize and deal with inner conflicts. Dialogue, discussion, and dissent are an inherent part of life in a university community" ("The University and Adversity," *SMU Mustang*, winter 1987).

To portray a university community without the presence of dissent is to paint half a picture for those who possess, by virtue of their heritage, the greatest right to know. In addition, if a university does not recognize its constituents' rights to candid information, the media certainly will. No longer does higher education exist in sublime isolation, its ivy-covered walls protecting it from public scrutiny. Education, like big-time athletics and old-time religion, has experienced its share of scandal in recent years, from the football field to the science lab to the presidential suite. Higher education can indeed supply the stuff of sensational headlines — and alumni will most certainly read them.

A college or university magazine that honestly reports problems achieves four important aims:

1. It communicates the message that the institution is strong enough to face and admit its problems, setting the groundwork for reform.
2. It provides a fuller account of complex dilemmas that the media may cover only superficially.
3. It places the current crisis into a perspective that will enhance alumni understanding — and patience — as solutions are sought.
4. It upholds the integrity of the academy, and, in so doing, shows alumni and others that it is worthy of their trust and support.

Alumni who read of their alma mater's problems in the media but see only puffery in their magazines will know they are being duped. Perhaps the only development deadlier to alumni loyalty than a scandal is the coverup of a scandal.

Some magazines fully and fairly reporting controversies have found themselves used by the media for background information. When *SMU Magazine* reported on its institution's athletic crisis, it ran a cover illustration showing a hand polishing a tarnished plaque bearing the university's name. Two months later, an influential city magazine described the cover in its lead on a major story about the institution. The angle: that the university was, indeed, cleaning up a messy situation and restoring the shine to its reputation.

The *Brown Alumni Monthly*, in its statement of purpose, sums up the wisdom of what it calls "informed good will": "Even in a time when it seems that information and good will, as they relate to campus events, are sometimes mutually exclusive, we continue to believe that the old cliché is true: An informed alumnus is, in the long run, a good alumnus."

Editors also agree that editorial freedom is not something sought, secured, and set into stone forever. It can be fleeting and changeable as editors, vice presidents supervising editors, and presidents supervising vice presidents come and go. It also can be issue-specific — a university ready and willing to talk about one problem, such as fraternity hazing, may be unwilling to discuss another, such as gay activism. "What all this means," says one editor, "is that editorial freedom never can be taken for granted, and that the battle for it never really ends." At a discussion of editorial freedom at the 1990 CASE Writing Institute, one editor added a sobering note by paraphrasing A.J. Liebling's famous quote: "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one."

Substance: Strength in Subtlety

Administrators who supervise editors say they recognize that a college or university magazine plays roles other than information-sharing. The chief advancement officers surveyed for this monograph agree that magazines support the institution's public relations, fund-raising, and student recruitment goals. But the editorial credibility and vitality of magazines can be weakened if their content is *directed toward* purely promotional goals. This direction can compromise the magazine's role as a vehicle for covering the institution fully and freely.

"By its very quality and creditable coverage of Brown, the *Brown Alumni Monthly* serves all of these efforts," says Robert A. Reichley, Brown University's executive vice president for alumni, public affairs, and external relations. "It supports *none* of them directly, and that is by policy. No one directs the magazine to do anything other than the editor. We rely upon a high-quality product to serve the needs of the institution, including the reporting of bad news from time to time."

In 1963 Verne Stadtman, then managing editor of *California Monthly* and president-elect of the American Alumni Council (a predecessor of CASE), lamented that some editors viewed their periodicals as "the instant rectifier of the blurring institutional image." He says: "It is the flattery box heaped with words of devotion and commendation for those who give honor — or just give — to the college" ("Alumni Publications: Inevitable, Invaluable, and Inhibited," *American Alumni Council News*, February 1963).

More recently, CASE Recognition Program judges in the university magazine category have observed: The "weakest of the lot were those magazines that restricted their editorial mission to extolling the philosophy and greatness of the university president. They stood as public relations instruments without vision or any lasting value" (Report of the Judges, University Magazine Category, CASE Recognition Program, 1987).

The consensus among the nation's top editors is that university magazines should employ the highest journalistic standards in content and graphics, and the resulting quality will support an institution's public relations goals. "Approach your work as if you were a newspaper reporter and your university your beat," says Beierle in the *Handbook of Alumni Administration* (1989). "Good editors ... know how to deliver information with taste, delicacy, and vigor," writes Dorothy Williams in *Communicating with Alumni* (1979). University magazines "must serve as consciousness raisers," says Spyros Andreopoulos, editor of *Stanford Medicine*, "not as purveyors of fluff and puff" (Walton R. Collins, "What's Wrong with Alumni Periodicals," CURRENTS, June 1985).

Elise Hancock, editor of *Johns Hopkins Magazine*, suggests that magazine editors mentally step outside of their institutions to get their bearings on the best way to cover — and in effect promote — their institutions. In a chapter of the *Handbook of Institutional Advancement*, she writes:

> Think about some institution you once attended but do not work for. Do you really want to know much about the new dean, someone you will never even meet? The new dorm? You will never use it. A lively paragraph

> or so, enough to satisfy idle curiosity about generally how things are changing, will be plenty for the alumni magazine.
>
> I am not saying, by the way, that your alumni magazine should not cover the institution and its events. It must. But it should often cover them by means of what I call the flipflop. Readers are suspicious of public relations. They know our magazines are house organs, and they accept the idea: Any alumnus who actually reads the magazine is, like us, on the side of the institution. Nevertheless, alumni will take our good news with large dollops of salt. For example, they will be bored and skeptical about the gleaming technological wonders of your new Infant Intensive Care Unit. If an article looks like public relations, it is not likely to be read. So flipflop the emphasis and slant the article toward general interest. You'll find readers are very interested in premature babies and the wonderful things that can now be done for them. Do heartwarming news fresh from the experts at your new Infant Intensive Care Unit, not PR on the new unit ("Shaping the Content and Character of Alumni Periodicals," 1986).

Conrad J. Storad, director of research publications at Arizona State University, takes a similar approach in *ASU Research Magazine*. "We are far less concerned with getting the name of a specific faculty member into the lead paragraph than we are with engaging the reader's attention. Once the reader is involved in the story, we have plenty of space to explain the ASU connection. In essence, we strive to simulate the intellectual accessibility and appeal of a general circulation science magazine" (Letter to Ann Granning Bennett, principal, College and University Publications Solutions, June 18, 1991).

It is indeed unfortunate that public relations seems to be equated with puffery — and that this misunderstanding on the part of university administrators remains a threat to effective periodical publishing. If there is a conflict between public relations and solid communication, then it is a conflict in practice rather than in principle. In both principle and practice, effective image-building should result from straightforward information-giving. In the case of controversy, where an information gap exists, it will be filled by sources outside the university — perhaps inaccurately — or by readers' imaginations — perhaps even more inaccurately. If magazines restrict themselves to pitching the positive, their glowing reports will instill more doubt than blind belief. As former *Columbia* Editor George Keller says, no one has "proved that an unwavering stream of polite, good announcements wins friends and influences people" ("Can Alumni Publications Be Both Loyal and Free?" *Communicating with Alumni*, 1979).

In the widely used textbook *Effective Public Relations*, Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center address the connection between public relations and alumni communications, a link that need not be miscast as a barrier: "Uninformed alumni can represent a disturbing interference in the conduct of the college.... There is a real need to do a better job of keeping alumni informed of more than merely ... classmates' doings and the football statistics.... In this era, the alumni magazine can and must become a channel of candid communication between an institution and its alumni. The day of the bland, rah-rah magazine, carrying college puffs, sports, and class notes, is dying" (1971).

Development: The Delicate Balance

Another question facing editors and their institutions is this: Must a magazine limit itself to an "unwavering stream of polite, good announcements" to help the university raise money? The proper relationship between information-giving and money-getting has been a subject of debate throughout the history of college and university magazines.

"I used to offend my colleagues in development by describing our partnership as what's known on the streets as a sandwich: I jostle the mark while you lift the wallet," writes Bernard R. Carman, director of public information at Lafayette College, in CURRENTS. "My colleagues were offended because, though that came near to the truth, it was stated too frankly" ("Beyond Control," CURRENTS, March 1987).

Another professional who is prone to such straightforwardness is Hancock of *Johns Hopkins Magazine*. An effective magazine can plow the ground "for little donations to grow in," she says. "Any honest editor of any magazine would admit that we are all shilling for something — makeup, or life style or a patriotic view or a liberal view. Wouldn't you rather be shilling for higher education?" ("Shaping the Content and Character of Alumni Periodicals," 1986).

"Shilling for higher education" has been an issue, in particular, for private colleges and universities, which in the United States, more than in any other country, look to their alumni for survival and support. This dependency is becoming more acute as federal funding for education decreases, enrollments reach plateaus because of a declining college-age population, and the Higher Education Price Index continues to rise at a rate faster than the Consumer Price Index. As a result, U.S. colleges and universities feel compelled now more than ever before to woo and wow their alumni in the hope of winning support.

In today's economic climate, this reliance upon fund raising no longer is the exclusive domain of private institutions. Public institutions have launched multimillion dollar campaigns and in recent years have presented their private counterparts with even more competition for a dwindling pool of philanthropic prospects. The threat to periodical publishing in such a climate is that independence and creativity could be stifled in the heat of the moment, in the name of campaign momentum.

Now seems to be the time for an even greater appreciation of the need for mutual respect and understanding between development officers and magazine editors. "Most editors don't like to admit it — in fact, the thought is heretical to us — but we want to keep alumni informed about our institutions because we want them to continue to feel that they are a part of the institution so that when a development officer makes a call on them, they will respond positively," writes Beierle of Emory in *Handbook for Alumni Administration*. "While the editor should never forget that his or her ultimate goal is the advancement of the institution, in my opinion the most effective university periodicals are those that operate with a strong sense of mission not directly tied to fund raising" ("Publications and Periodicals," 1989).

In a recent survey of 16 advancement officers who supervise award-winning editors, all reported that their institutions' magazines have an indirect impact upon development — and they support that relationship. "We've never asked for money, and we rarely even report on what we use donations for," says Donald M. Pattison,

director of public affairs and editor at Pomona College, in his survey response. "Fund-raising efforts are handled separately, which frees up the magazine as a friend-raiser."

Many magazines take a journalistic approach to fund raising — they report on campaign kickoffs and results just as they would any other institutional developments. "We can't ignore the fact that the campaign is one of the biggest stories at the university," says *Kansas Alumni* magazine editor Jennifer Jackson Sanner, interviewed for a CURRENTS article. "I'd be a poor journalist if I ignored a story like that" (Robert J. Bliwise, "Détente with Development," CURRENTS, November/December 1988). In these cases, development directors become sources to be interviewed and quoted, just as any other institutional officer who serves as an information resource.

Some magazines at institutions carrying on capital campaigns devote a clearly labeled section of the magazine to reporting fund-raising news. (Others publish special campaign newsletters.) These magazine sections should be presented, however, with good taste and high standards. They should avoid the hackneyed use of photographs showing grinning administrators shaking hands with donors, cocktail party scenes, and presentations of oversized cardboard checks from donor to president. Instead, they should focus coverage on the *results* of effective fund raising — the diverse and gifted students attracted to your institutions by donor-sponsored scholarships, the enhancement of teaching and the expansion of research made possible by new libraries and laboratories. In these sections, key donors can be highlighted through occasional personality profiles rather than lifeless listings of names.

In all cases, direct appeals should appear only in advertisements plainly identified as emanating from the development office and consistently kept to a minimum. One university publishes a regular feature titled "Supporting the University" and publishes articles that focus on major donors. Most others avoid publishing donor profiles in the regular sections of their magazines, using achievement rather than affluence as the key factor determining newsworthiness. In some magazines, a one-page "Profile of Giving" or "Donor's Profile" may appear near the alumni section with a tag-line that indicates sponsorship by the office of development and that clearly identifies the item as promotional. And neither the letter nor the spirit of solicitation should be injected into regular feature writing or invoked as a reason to soft-pedal thorny issues.

"At Duke, we worked to bring balance to a nasty news item about a young alumnus facing federal charges in an alleged securities scam," writes Bliwise. "When the charges surfaced, the university acted quickly to cancel pledges and return gifts — including valuable paintings — made in his name. Our news item about the alumnus included an explanation of the university's return-to-sender decision. Our fund raisers, who had considered the episode an unmitigated embarrassment for the university, believed the magazine's treatment helped counteract the negative effect of nationwide coverage" (Bliwise, November/December 1988).

Such efforts recognize a basic tenet often overlooked in the frenzy of fear that can develop when bad news is viewed as threatening to good fund raising: Donors, of all people, deserve an honest reporting from the colleges and universities they

support. An institution that has one hand in a donor's pocket while the other hand covers his or her eyes fools only itself and will not long succeed in parting prospects from their money. It is true that disclosure sometimes causes discontent, but the alternative — keeping donors in the dark — should be neither the philosophy nor the practice of an institution dedicated to enlightenment.

Most top magazine editors agree that their periodicals best serve their institutions' fund-raising efforts when they are permitted to be their best as vehicles of open communication. As a policy statement for Rice University's *Sallyport* maintains, "Though not using direct solicitation, the magazine's content reminds readers of the quality of the university's programs, its current and former students, and its ongoing push for excellence."

In a recent letter to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, William W. Lace, director of college relations for Tarrant County Junior College, offers this perspective: "The various aspects of what has come to be known as institutional advancement complement one another and have as their common goal exactly what the name implies — the advancement of the institution's mission. Thus, the well-written piece about research projects enhances financial support for research, the story about minority scholars gives impetus to scholarship programs, the article about the institution's active roles in its community bears fruit in a bond election or in a legislative hearing" (March 6, 1991).

The Communications Circle

College and university magazines not only play multiple roles in communicating information and ideas from institution to constituent, but also should serve as a pipeline for readers to share opinions, concerns, and questions about the college or university. Many top magazines publish "Letters to the Editor" pages containing lively exchanges of viewpoints between readers, enabling both editors and administrators to benefit from a sampling of constituent opinion. These exchanges also communicate a message about the institution's constituents themselves: They continue to question, deliberate, and debate; they are, as a result of their collegiate experience, an educated and engaged citizenry. In this way, too, magazines serve as an extension of education, of the deliberations that are central to learning.

A more scientific way of gathering reader reaction is through readership surveys, still an underused method of measurement for higher education periodicals. Surveys can provide a profile of readership that includes basic demographic data, along with information on which periodicals audiences consistently read, which sections generate the most interest, and how readers judge the quality of the communications they receive from the institution. Surveys also can solicit ideas for future coverage.

The use of survey results raises another question about the role of college and university magazines: Should editors give readers what they want or what they believe they need to know to understand the institution as it exists today? This question is especially compelling for institutions in transition.

In the late 1970s, one private university with an exaggerated "party school" reputation drastically raised its admission standards, upgraded its faculty, and

devoted more resources to merit scholarships to attract higher-achieving students. But the institution's quarterly magazine reflected the previous state-of-the-university. Making ill use of its magazine format, the periodical consisted primarily of short news items about sports and reunion parties, with an abundance of grip-and-grin and stilted group photos. To portray the institution's new reality, in 1983 a new editor revamped the magazine, adding features focusing on academic life and interpreting higher education issues, condensing sports to a two-page summary spread, placing alumni events news in a clearly labeled and organized section, improving photography, and even changing the magazine's name, which previously had reflected the school's athletic mascot.

"At that point," the editor says, "a readership survey might have told us that most alumni — reflecting past values — did not want the magazine to change. But to represent the institution as it was now evolving, the magazine had to evolve, too. With our new feature focus, we made a deliberate decision to direct our magazine toward a new understanding of the university. But we did not abandon our traditional readers — they still had their alumni and sports news, although much abbreviated." As a result of the transformation of both university and magazine, many alumni who had felt alienated because of the institution's image now told the editor they felt a renewed pride in their alma mater. Even those representing the "good old days" became proud of the quality the magazine came to reflect.

The experience illustrates additional challenges for magazine editors. They must establish a vision for their periodicals that speaks to the college or university's current academic aspirations, must avoid the temptation to appeal to the lowest common denominator of tastes, and must bridge the generations to build acceptance and support of the institution's goals. A magazine must project its institution's academic mission and not function merely as an exercise in nostalgia for a certain segment of its alumni. College and university magazines must blend — creatively and sensitively — past, present, and future.

The role of college and university magazines is to inform, interpret, interest, and at times to inspire. Editors must be allowed to master their craft, while alumni administrators and fund raisers build upon those efforts to encourage involvement and investment. The roles should not be confused, and need not be. They work in tandem toward the goal of advancement.

Chapter 3

Policies and Practices: From Funding to Freedom

A survey of 22 magazines that have won CASE Recognition Awards in recent years reveals more commonality than diversity in policies, in spite of the differences among institutions.

The survey population included 17 magazines from private colleges and universities and five from state institutions. The periodicals included magazines from Ivy League colleges and universities that established the tradition of excellence in alumni publishing as well as younger institutions that are learning from their elders and extending the tradition throughout the nation. The institutions with younger magazines range from large, research-dominated state universities to small liberal arts colleges, from the Midwest to the Southwest, from the Deep South to the Far West.

Management and Staffing

The staffing profile of these institutions is that of the hands-on editor whose duties include managing the overall magazine operation, writing major features and sections, and supervising design and production. Not surprisingly, editors at more established magazines with higher frequencies (six to nine times a year) spend more time on magazine management and are less likely to bear responsibility for supervising other publications at their institutions.

At one small college in California, the public affairs director serves also as magazine editor; he spends about 50 percent of his time on the magazine and the remainder supervising other publications and media relations. On the other hand, the editor of a high-profile eastern university magazine now sold on the newsstands spends 100 percent of his time on "magazine management." Most other editors fall in the middle range, spending the majority of their time on their magazines but assisting with some other periodicals as well. Their institutions seem to have recognized that time, as well as talent, is a chief factor affecting the quality of magazines. Indeed, to invest financial resources into the magazine format without

the concomitant investment of adequate staff time is a formula for failure in the communication enterprise.

The size of staffs devoted primarily to magazine duties ranges from three to 20; the larger staffs are those of magazines with substantial business operations that coordinate off-campus, paid circulation and large amounts of paid advertising. Staff members outside the specific magazine unit — such as news release writers, photographers, and designers — also contribute to the production of college and university magazines. All but one of the institutions use free-lancers for writing, and most others employ them for photography, design assistance, or illustration. Thirteen of the magazines use faculty-written articles, and seven of them pay these authors.

The variety of professional services needed to produce a successful magazine underscores the need for editors who are effective managers as well as communicators. They must provide the unifying vision for their periodicals while they motivate others to contribute important elements to the total effort.

Reporting Relationships

Seven of the editors report to vice presidents, most of whom supervise university relations and/or development operations, but one editor reports to a vice president in charge of finance and administration. One editor reports to an associate vice president and two to an assistant vice president for university relations; three report to directors of alumni relations; four to directors of public relations; and two to directors of publications. One editor reports directly to the alumni publications committee of his university, another to the university's board of directors.

Drawing conclusions from these results is difficult because of the variety of administrative patterns that exist in college and university advancement. It is noteworthy, however, that editors at more established magazines, those with long-term records of excellence, tend to report higher up within the administrative structure, usually to vice presidents. Many of these editors are themselves senior-level professionals whose long service to their professions warrants high esteem within the institution. Their status within the administrative hierarchy seems to indicate that their institutions value — and reward — not only their worth as professionals, but the importance of the communications vehicles they direct.

More important than status, perhaps, is these editors' access to top management. They are insiders who are privy to information that is essential in planning comprehensive coverage of the institution, and they have the authority to function as true professionals in carrying out the mission of their periodicals.

Audiences

Half of the 22 institutions send their magazines to all alumni, and some include in that definition former students who did not graduate; the other 50 percent send the magazine to alumni donors or dues-paying alumni. Other typical audiences include non-alumni donors, parents, faculty, and staff. Some institutions, recogniz-

ing that students as alumni-in-residence must be eased into the alumni culture, distribute their magazines to seniors. Some state institutions, as well as a few private colleges and universities, send magazines to legislators and other key decision-makers. Again, the longer-established magazines are leading the way in audience cultivation; the most recent trend is to sell their magazines at newsstands. MIT's *Technology Review* has been a newsstand magazine for several years, and in recent years has been joined by *Bostonia* of Boston University and *Notre Dame Magazine*. One university distributes its magazine free at local bookstores as a way of increasing the institution's visibility in the community.

Some colleges and universities, seeking every edge in the competitive marketplace for students, use university magazines as supplemental communications vehicles for high school counselors and prospective students and parents. The magazines, say admissions professionals, can provide not only a window on the vitality of the university community, but perspectives on the achievements of alumni — of great interest to career-minded young people. There is some danger here if editors are pressured to publish overtly promotional content, rather than substantive articles (including coverage of controversies) that enable the excitement of the collegiate experience to speak for itself.

Supplemental Periodicals

Most of the institutions surveyed (16) do not expect their magazines to carry the complete responsibility of communication to alumni and other constituents. In this way, they allow their magazines to be well-targeted editorially, freed from the temptation to be "all things to all people" and as a result perhaps meaningful to no one. Many colleges and universities publish tabloids devoted primarily to coverage of alumni programs, enabling their magazines to focus on people, research, and issues reflecting the academic mission. Many institutions also publish separate school or departmental newsletters reporting the developments of those entities in more detail than would be possible in a general-interest college or university magazine. Some also publish campaign newsletters focusing on fund-raising goals and progress, as well as a separate periodical for faculty and staff.

The strength of this multi-periodicals approach is that it allows each publication to meet the particular needs of the audience and the college or university unit served. The pitfall to avoid is the production of overlapping or conflicting communications vehicles that will confuse — and in these days of junk-mail abundance, irritate — an institution's constituencies. Another problem lies in the lack of unity in institutional identity that can occur when numerous periodicals — all with a different look and style — emanate from several areas of the institution. With the advent of desktop publishing, the danger of periodicals proliferation will increase. Some institutions are attempting to achieve coordination by developing standardized tabloid and newsletter formats that each unit can adapt to its particular needs. Thus, even though the editorial content of the business school newsletter may differ from that of the theology school tabloid, both look as if they emerged from the same "family." They are bound, but not restricted, by ties to the mother institution.

Frequency and Length

Of the 22 institutions surveyed, 10 publish quarterly magazines. Other frequencies reported are semi-annually (one institution); three times a year (one); five times (two); six times (five); eight times (one); nine times (one); and 10 times (one). The most frequently reported length is 48 to 56 pages, plus cover. Two Ivy League magazines run 112 to 150 pages in length and appear six and eight times a year.

Effective communication with diverse constituencies requires adequate frequency. A magazine issued three times a year, with no supplemental tabloids or newsletters, usually does not provide readers with enough continuity of contact from the institution. Three magazines and three supplemental tabloids provide a more acceptable frequency of contact. Another common formula combines four magazines with two tabloids a year. One model of excellence is the *Brown Alumni Monthly*, produced nine times a year — providing high frequency with consistent high quality.

As education resources become tighter, some institutions have reduced the frequency of their magazines to concentrate resources on preserving the quality of what they publish. The challenge is to balance high quality with a frequency sufficient to keep the institution effectively linked with its constituencies.

Sources of Support

Some magazines have responded to the threat of dwindling resources by establishing voluntary subscription programs. They ask readers to pay a set amount each year to help defray publishing costs, even though they could continue to receive the magazine free. When the *Brown Alumni Monthly* initiated its voluntary subscription program in 1978, one direct mail solicitation to alumni brought in $56,000 from 5,500 alumni. In 1989, the magazine suggested a contribution of $25 from each reader. This request brought in $197,000 in extra income for the magazine, which continues to receive support from the university.

Editors advise that such efforts will work primarily with magazines that have a history of high quality, those that have developed in their readers long-standing expectations of — and an appetite for — such quality. Institutions with new magazines but with strong histories of alumni interest and involvement also may find a voluntary subscription program an effective source of support. Of the magazines surveyed, seven have instituted such programs, one accounting for as much as 70 percent of the magazine's support.

The most common source of funding listed, however, was institutional support, with 10 magazines reporting 95-100 percent support from their colleges or universities. Other income sources are alumni association dues, advertising, and newsstand sales. In an era of lowering enrollments and increased competition for philanthropic dollars, more and more belt-tightening institutions will expect their magazine editors to become entrepreneurs in developing alternative sources of support.

The Content of Communication

All award-winners, the magazine editors in the survey group clearly know what they are doing. What is surprising is that 10 of them, almost half, do not have written editorial policies or statements of purpose, documents that would help others within the institution to understand their philosophy of publishing. Such statements, which need not be lengthy, can serve as a "touchstone" that "forces you to focus your ideas," says Elise Hancock of *Johns Hopkins Magazine*. "This statement is not for publication, so be honest. If good news is part of your purpose, put it in the statement. If covering every part of the institution equally is part of your goal, say so. If there must, must, must be some sort of institutional connection with every story, say so." A statement of purpose can direct, and need not restrict, a magazine's editorial character. "The fact is," Hancock adds, "there is always a way to handle any subject...." ("Shaping the Content and Character of Alumni Periodicals," *Handbook of Institutional Advancement*, 1986).

The magazine goals listed by editors in the survey support the trends reported in Chapter 2 — not only keeping alumni informed about the institution, but advancing understanding of the college or university's academic mission and extending that mission to alumni through articles that make their alma mater a source of lifelong learning. As *Pitt Magazine*'s goal states, the periodical seeks "to share the ongoing intellectual adventure of the University with our alumni and friends, to tell their stories, as well as our own, in the context of issues of contemporary concern." (A fuller discussion of magazine goals appears in Chapter 2; sample statements of purpose appear in the Appendix.)

The best magazines "parallel the best commercial magazines in their far more sophisticated approach to content," writes Donna Shoemaker. "Rather than assuming their readers share only a collegial experience, they understand that the graduates share a deep curiosity about the world. These editors search their campus and community to discover topics of compelling interest; they strive for high standards in writing, editing, and design; they attempt to apply more rigorous journalistic ethics to detour around, where possible, the roadblock of being strictly an in-house organ" ("Alumni Periodical Goals, Resources, and Quality: A Study of the Perceptions of Campus Editors, Alumni Professionals, and Journalism Educators," 1988).

Topics of "compelling interest" emerge from "everyone, everywhere," one editor says. The editors surveyed draw upon ideas from alumni and other readers, magazine staff, institutional officers, faculty, free-lancers, and members of editorial advisory boards. One editor develops articles by "trendwatching, inviting representatives from all areas of the university [to offer ideas], and by reading everything I can get my hands on."

Many editors emphasize the importance of regular contact with university departments and offices. "There are editors who systematically call on one department head after another, rotating around the institution all year. That approach is ideal, and those with a less systematic temperament should try to approximate it, eating lunch with various faculty members several times a week" (Hancock, 1986).

Editorial Authority

As open as they are to suggestions, however, all of the editors report that editorial decisions are primarily theirs to make. Some report "distant supervision" over their decisions on content. All but three of the editors report that "no one" above them reviews copy as a regular practice before publication. One editor sends his vice president a set of page proofs "as a courtesy." Another sends a list of articles, but not copy, to the president of the institution. Some editors report that they will seek review on articles whose content is "sensitive" or "tricky." "Under special circumstances, the president would review [an article] if there is content with which we do not want to surprise the president," one editor says.

If disputes about coverage arise, editors have the final decision-making authority in nine of the institutions surveyed. Others indicate that their supervising officers would resolve the issue. "There is generally an attempt to compromise or address the situation without outright censorship," one editor says. Another reports that she would bring the dispute to the magazine's publications committee. "Failing on agreement there, the decision would go to the president of the alumni association. This is outlined in our editorial policy but has never had to be used (so far)."

Most of the editors believe that their magazines cover controversial topics "objectively and fairly," "responsibly," and "analytically and interpretatively." Says one editor, "As with all news, we cover controversies with simple, accessible description of outcomes, minimizing attendant politics and bickering." Four of the editors report that they generally do not cover controversies for a variety of reasons: "We do few up-to-date news stories because of the infrequency of the publication [twice yearly]," one editor says. "We tend to side-step them," says another. "We cover controversies outside the institution."

To warrant coverage, controversies must have an impact on "the structure or greater goals of the university," many respondents agree. "Often, the day-to-day tussles are not timely for a quarterly," says one editor. "We do cover statewide educational controversy, such as within the state board or legislature, if it pertains to us." Another covers "only what's of reasonable interest to alumni — we stay out of faculty-administration squabbles."

Some controversial topics that editors deemed worthy of coverage include the status of women at the university, research ethics, basketball and football scandals, a president's resignation, a computer virus launched by a graduate student, racism, student rapes, divestment, and drug testing of athletes. A topic considered off limits by one editor: "the football coach's affair with the wife of his assistant."

Most editors agree with the policy expressed by one of their colleagues: "A campus is a place of controversy; our policy is not to ignore difficult issues, but to give them a balanced presentation."

Asked if they believe they have a reasonable amount of editorial freedom, most of the editors answer yes. "I'm respected as a professional and am never told what to do, although I receive hundreds of ideas and suggestions," says one editor. "So far all involved have been my allies." "Despite sensitivity to controversy," says another, "the overall latitude is very wide; no story idea has ever been killed and no story idea has ever been rejected." At one institution, the magazine staff meets regularly with

senior administrators to discuss story ideas, "but administrators have sufficient respect for editorial integrity and judgment to avoid vetoing ideas," the editor says.

In her master's thesis, Shoemaker explores the question of how objective an alumni periodical should be and then compares the survey responses of 153 journalism educators, 165 editors, and 181 alumni relations professionals. She asked respondents "not whether they would break such a story [controversies such as athletic scandals or racial incidents] to their readers if no other source had done so already, but instead how they would approach" a story already reported by outside media. Seventy-nine percent of the group "saw the need for at least some degree of fairness in reporting such controversies, with more than half (54 percent) of respondents favoring a modified approach that provides a balance still weighted toward the institutional viewpoint yet permitting other opinions as well," she reports. "Still, almost two-fifths of the entire group favored a less candid approach, with 9 percent not willing to venture beyond the official position and 10 percent not willing to even address the controversy through the periodical, even when the issue in question had already been aired in public and their readers may indeed have come across coverage that did not reflect what the college or university officials might have felt was the whole truth" (Shoemaker, 1988).

When Shoemaker analyzes answers in terms of the respondent's occupation, she finds that "the alumni professionals tended, more so than the other two groups, to give only the institution's official viewpoint rather than giving equal weight to all sides of an issue." Journalism educators favored candor, but not significantly higher levels of candor than supported by periodicals editors. "The latter two groups appear to see eye-to-eye on the need for some candor."

As we have seen throughout the history of college and university magazines, editorial freedom has been hard-fought and not easily won through the efforts of numerous editors who proved their sense of responsibility and earned their credibility on a daily basis. Today's editors are the fortunate beneficiaries of these efforts. But today's editors also know that the battle for the freedom of responsible reporting never ends.

Conclusion

Although the genre of college and university magazines seems to have passed from the dark ages to an era of enlightenment, many individual magazines remain sorely in need of increased resources and higher levels of professionalism.

The most recent overview of university magazines comes in the form of judges' comments in the 1991 CASE Recognition Program. "The best university magazines, particularly the gold medal winners, exhibited high quality in all the key elements — writing, editing, design, photography," the judges say. "Most elements contributed to the overall effect of the magazine. There were few disappointing spreads. Even the more mundane items were handled with efficiency and good taste.

"There were several innovative cover designs.... The selection of articles showed diversity and sensitivity to the interests of a broad audience."

At the same time, the judges note, "too many magazines lacked distinction. They didn't seem to portray the inherent characteristics of the institution they represented."

Some magazines invested heavily in lavish cover and lead article designs but left the rest of the magazine's pages looking bland and barren. "It was sometimes like looking at two different magazines under one cover," one judge says. Weak editing, convoluted writing, shallow articles, and overdesign also drew criticism (Report of the Judges, University Magazine Category, 1991 CASE Recognition Program).

Even among the magazines that have achieved high levels of excellence, several challenges remain, and several questions arise: As colleges and universities continue to feel the strain of stretched finances, will magazines survive the quest to cut expenses? If magazines do survive, will the increased competition for donor support, and the resulting fear of donor backlash, cause administrators to overreact with undue restraints on editorial freedom? Will the fear of short-term discomfort lead colleges and universities to sacrifice the open communication necessary to build long-term understanding of the true goals of higher education?

Such an environment will demand the best and the most courageous leadership that college and university magazine editors — and their institutions — can provide.

Appendix

Professional Benchmarks for Periodicals Editors *

1. An understanding of the issues, challenges, and trends in education and the advancement of education — the national context in which one's institution operates.

2. An understanding of the heritage, mission, values, needs, and goals of one's institution, including the ability to interpret these aspects of the institution to internal and external audiences.

3. An understanding of basic communications principles, including the ability to identify and analyze audiences, to select appropriate communications methods to interest them, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts.

4. Competence in journalism, including the techniques of interviewing; gathering, synthesizing, and organizing information; presenting balanced accounts of complex or controversial subjects; fact-checking; editing and proofreading.

5. The ability to write accurately, coherently, creatively, and persuasively in a range of editorial formats, such as news articles, features, and personality profiles, as well as the ability to evaluate the writing of others.

6. Verbal skills to communicate effectively with internal and external constituencies, both academic and nonacademic, as well as professional colleagues.

7. An understanding of legal and ethical issues related to publishing and a commitment to uphold high standards of operation in both areas.

8. An ongoing commitment to pursue knowledge, to read widely, to remain aware of societal trends and issues that not only will affect the climate in which education operates, but will provide a foundation upon which to plan periodicals with vitality and creativity.

9. An understanding of visual communication principles and practices, such as design, typography, photography, illustration, typesetting, and printing, and the ability to coordinate the work of professionals in these areas.

10. Editorial planning skills, including the ability to develop and recognize good article ideas, to provide direction to writers carrying out assignments, to ensure balanced coverage that presents the various aspects of one's institution, to develop long-range plans, and to adapt plans to changing needs and circumstances.

11. The ability to work effectively and to maintain credibility with campus constituencies — in developing sources of information, balancing conflicting priorities, maintaining the authority necessary to make sound editorial decisions free of undue interference, and building an understanding of the editorial mission

of periodicals, the professional standards employed, and the ways in which periodicals support institutional goals.

12. Management skills to coordinate the varied aspects of the periodicals operation, supervise and motivate staff, and evaluate productivity and effectiveness.

13. Financial management skills to plan and operate periodicals cost-effectively within annual budgets, to forecast cost changes, to institute cost-saving measures, to manage advertising and circulation incomes, and to develop other sources of financial support.

14. Knowledge of mailing list management and periodicals distribution and mailing procedures, including regulations, and the ability to work effectively with staff and vendors involved.

15. Practical knowledge of publishing technology and ongoing efforts to remain up-to-date on emerging technological advances in the preparation of periodicals.

* Adopted by the CASE Commission on Periodicals, 1991.

CASE Statement of Ethics for Periodicals Editors

- Periodicals editors represent their profession as well as their readers and their institutions.

- Editors have a responsibility to observe ethical standards and present material accurately, striving for truth, good taste, and fairness in their periodicals.

- They base the content of their magazines and newspapers on skilled research and mature interpretation of background. When appropriate, editors assume the responsibility of presenting opinion from diverse points of view.

- They protect the right of individual privacy and respect confidential information.

- They respect the rights of fellow editors and writers and provide credit for ideas and words borrowed from others, honoring copyright and other privileges.

- They publish no material other than advertising in return for payment or exchanges. Editors do not allow advertisers to influence editorial content and refrain from accepting special consideration for influence on the content of their periodicals or on organizational decisions.

- They treat fairly in words and in images the various races; religious, national, and ethnic groups; and the sexes.

- Editors observe these ethical standards and in so doing set a good example for others in the field to follow.

Source: Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Sample Mission Statements of College and University Magazines

***Brown Alumni Monthly*, Brown University**

The *Brown Alumni Monthly*'s purpose remains what it has been since it was founded in 1900: informed good will. Even at a time when it seems that information and good will, as they relate to campus events, are sometimes mutually exclusive, we continue to believe that the old cliché is true: An informed alumnus is, in the long run, a good alumnus.

The magazine must continue to do what the institution began — to educate. It must do so with confidence and optimism, in the solemn belief that educational institutions produce educated men and women capable of accepting even those ideas with which they do not agree. Our purpose is also to continue to fulfill the traditional role of the alumni magazine as an instrument through which its readers keep in touch with each other.

***Duke Magazine*, Duke University**

The essential mission of *Duke Magazine* was outlined in the message to readers that opened the inaugural issue:

"We hope the magazine will be compelling in its content, striking in its visual impression. We hope it will provide a sense of the intellectual dynamism that characterizes the Duke community: Interesting people and interesting ideas will fill its pages. And we hope, most of all, that the magazine will serve the purpose of education. If we succeed as editors, then you, the reader, will find yourself informed, challenged, surprised with every plunge you take into an issue."

The magazine is supported by Duke University in a substantial way: The university absorbs most of the production costs, pays the salaries of the editorial staff, and provides office space. It is also true that the magazine is a powerful representative of the university: It provides regular and effective contact with the university's largest and most geographically far-flung constituency, its alumni body. If the magazine is an inviting publication — if it offers interesting reading and powerful graphics — it implicitly helps make the case for supporting Duke.

It follows that the magazine, to be a good representative of Duke, must convey a sense of the university. It should put its readers in touch with the realities of Duke, offering a balanced article mix that reflects the many sides of the campus experience: profiles of Duke newsmakers, observations on academic life and student life, and reports from the research frontiers. In addition to the feature-article component, the magazine should offer a section strictly devoted to news of the campus.

But serving Duke's interest implies, too, respecting the stature of the university as an intellectual community. The magazine best advances the university by representing Duke as a place that fosters thinking — as a community of intellectual

dynamism and diversity. The magazine should avoid the parochial emphasis — the concern with campus in isolation — that often characterizes alumni publishing. It should, instead, present Duke in a large context, giving attention to the interplay between university and society, and to the ways in which the one influences the other. A consistent editorial theme, then, should be Duke perspectives on the weighty issues of the day — social, political, educational.

The magazine should be edited with the assumption that candor is the best policy. Candor entails recognizing that debate is central to an institution that values the intellectual life; to eschew controversy would be to paint an unrealistic picture. The magazine directs itself to a discerning readership. Maintaining the respect of that readership means portraying the university in a balanced and believable manner.

Coverage in the magazine should reflect the diversity of the campus as well as the quality of candor. The magazine exists to serve the university as a whole. If it turns itself to serving any particular interest within the university, it risks not fulfilling that charge. The magazine should not lose sight of its main audience, however, meaning the alumni of Duke. Its center section, with an emphasis on class notes and news of the alumni association, is directed specifically to alumni. Through an active letters column in that section, the magazine should encourage reader response.

A three-member editorial staff is responsible for direction and production of the magazine. The editor has overall responsibility for editorial policy, issue planning, developing story ideas, and recruiting free-lance contributors; the associate editor has the chief responsibility for supervising the design of the magazine, producing the section devoted to class notes and news of the alumni association, and coordinating advertising; the features editor carries most of the responsibility for researching and writing feature articles and news items. The staff is supplemented by paid contributors — writers, photographers, and artists. Because they represent a fresh point of view, these contributions should be considered one of the strengths of the magazine.

The editorial staff reports to the director of alumni affairs, who in turn is responsible to the vice president for alumni affairs and development. The editors are expected to consult regularly with these and other appropriate senior officials of the university. Such consultations should be for the purpose of receiving assistance in issue planning. University officials should be respectful of editorial judgment: they should not seek to impose a particular point of view on the magazine.

Outside the university, the Editorial Advisory Board is the group established to provide continuing counsel from professionals in commercial publishing. The board is made up of alumni and parent volunteers who assist the editors in formulating editorial policies, provide guidance on story ideas, evaluate past issues, help acquire the services of free-lance contributors, and suggest ways to ensure the financial viability of the magazine.

The magazine is not a promotional vehicle for any cause other than the cause of the university; and it promotes the cause of the university most effectively through its editorial focus on interesting people and interesting ideas.

Minnesota, The University of Minnesota

Minnesota is a magazine for people who support education, equality, and diversity and believe that as educated individuals they can make a positive difference in their homes, communities, state, nation, and world. They believe in the University of Minnesota and have demonstrated their commitment by actively supporting its activities and goals and by joining the University of Minnesota Alumni Association. They care enough about the University to want a realistic picture of its strengths and weaknesses in order to help set direction and improve it.

Minnesota's editorial mission is to link alumni and the University of Minnesota; to build support and enthusiasm for the University of Minnesota by providing information that is important and necessary about the people and activities that make it one of the top public universities in the nation; and to be recognized for providing the insight and perspective of the University's educators and educated on issues that are important and necessary to alumni and the University.

The functions of *Minnesota*'s editorial components are:

Departments: These provide information on the leadership activities of the University's colleges and schools and the association itself. They include working information for University of Minnesota Alumni Association members, a calendar of events, class notes, and alumni/reader opinion.

Columns: This eclectic category highlights the new and unusual, the breakthroughs, and reflects the diverse nature of the University. It includes profiles of outstanding faculty, alumni, student athletes, and coaches and information on their work and accomplishments.

Features: These interpret major achievements and activities of the University as they relate to the larger community and present major issues in education, from the Minnesota experience. Features are meant to appeal to the larger audience, to inspire action, and to increase understanding.

Because our readers have demonstrated commitment to the University and the University of Minnesota Alumni Association, *Minnesota* seeks to reward them with the finest writing, graphics, art, and photography available.

Notre Dame Magazine, The University of Notre Dame

Notre Dame Magazine is the periodical of a university that is striving to achieve academic distinction while maintaining its roots in the Roman Catholic tradition. The magazine is catholic in scope and Catholic in viewpoint, and it seeks to provide continuing education to Notre Dame alumni, parents, and friends by examining issues relating to public affairs and personal lifestyles; to articulate the Christian and humanistic values which Notre Dame professes to uphold; to inform the university's constituencies of significant campus events and trends; to portray the life of the

campus; to celebrate the achievements, examine the difficulties and report the views of Notre Dame people whose stories might offer significant lessons to others; and to accomplish the traditional objectives of an alumni magazine by furnishing news of Notre Dame classes and clubs.

Oxford Today, Oxford University

Oxford Today, a University magazine for all graduate members of the University, was launched in October 1988, a reflection of the University's recognition of the importance of keeping in touch with graduates.

The magazine covers a variety of topics, both general and academic — sporting events, undergraduate activities, research projects, news of leading University personalities, and contributions from Oxonians about their present activities.

It is sent free of charge once a term to approximately 100,000 Oxonians of all ages and in all parts of the world, and an enthusiastic postbag reflects the interest and attention with which it has been received. All graduate members are eligible to receive it; the only requirement is that their correct address be registered with their college or the University.

SMU Magazine, Southern Methodist University

Specific objectives of *SMU Magazine*:

1. To portray the intellectual vitality — the exchange of ideas, the inquiring minds, the diversity of expertise — present in this comprehensive University.
2. To highlight the increasing academic excellence of the University and the ways in which this quality benefits both students and the larger society.
3. To communicate the challenges specific to SMU and shared by higher education institutions in general.
4. To keep alumni and other readers candidly informed about developments in all aspects of University life.
5. To help alumni and other readers to view the University as a source of continued learning in their lives.
6. To interpret the mission of the University embraced by new leadership ushering the institution into the 21st century.
7. To support the University's efforts to reach out to new constituencies such as members of minority groups and to portray the resulting diversity of people contributing to, and benefitting from, an open community of learning.
8. To communicate the special nature of the University as a church-related, private liberal arts institution offering a personalized and value-centered education.
9. To highlight the achievements of alumni and provide a vehicle for keeping alumni in touch with each other as well as the institution.

Sallyport, Rice University

Sallyport is the magazine of Rice University. It is published by the Office of External Affairs and distributed free of charge (with an option for voluntary subscriptions) to alumni, faculty and staff, parents of current undergraduates, and friends of the university. *Sallyport* seeks to provide its readers with an accurate portrayal of Rice today and faithful recollections of the university in years past. *Sallyport*'s writing, editing, and design should by their high quality reflect the excellence of Rice University.

Sallyport should observe the highest standards of reportorial ethics, and the writing should be correct and effective. Topics will generally be selected in order to provide positive reinforcement about Rice to its constituents; however, any topic included in *Sallyport* should be treated in an honest, objective, and forthright manner with due observance of the author's license to treat his or her subject matter in unusual and unexpected ways.

Section 2
CURRENTS Reprints: Substance and Style

Making Good Writing Great

The message is clear: Keep it short, original, and vibrant
by Paula LaRocque

Let's begin with some reassurance. Writing well, even artistically, is *not* as hard as many claim—and not as hard as people often make it. Writing well basically means communicating successfully—and writerly sturm, drang, and angst aside, you communicate successfully if your message is accurate, brief, and clear. That's a manageable task.

Accuracy and brevity are easy to dispense with: Get it right and keep it short.

But clarity bears at least brief discussion before we consider the devices that help make good writing great. That's because without clarity, both craft *and* art crumble. Conversely, the devices that promote clarity also lay the foundation for successful artistic embellishment.

Making it clear

The basic components of clarity are comfortingly simple. Briefly, they are sentence length, story length, and vocabulary. Simple and accessible *content* might seem basic, but it isn't. That's the whole point: *Making* the content simple and accessible is every writer's job. It's the result of a clarifying writing process.

Readership studies consistently show that 20-word sentences are fairly clear and 30-word sentences are not. The studies also show that no matter how well written your sentence, there's always someone who won't quite understand it. Don't make matters worse. Consider a deficit every word you add to a sentence already numbering 20 to 23 words.

Another device for determining clarity is a readability index, such as Robert Gunning's Fog Index that examines sentence length and vocabulary. Some software programs measure readability as well. Those programs vary in usefulness, but something is better than nothing when considering the clarity of your work.

Obviously, you can't reduce the demands of good writing to merely counting words. But a low Fog Index does usually correspond to high readability, and high readability corresponds to high *interest*.

Brevity in overall story length also promotes clarity. No story should be longer than it has to be to make its point. Padding, deadwood, bloated rhetoric, and redundancy are the enemies of clarity as well as brevity.

Vocabulary is the third common obstacle to clarity. With pretentious, polysyllabic, unfamiliar, or specialized terms, define them or reduce them to short, commonly understood phrases.

Below are five additional basic principles to higher clarity.

1. When you *must* use a long sentence, place a short one before and after it.

2. Don't have more than three figures of any kind in any sentence. Here, for example, is a sentence actually printed in a newspaper:

The ninth-grade students did well on most of the three parts of the test with at least 85 percent of the students at more than two-thirds of the schools passing seven of the 28 test objectives.

Break passages that are dense with figures into shorter sentences.

3. Don't have more than three prepositional phrases in any sentence. If the phrases run consecutively or have the same preposition (to, in, by, of, etc.), even three are too many. This lead paragraph from a news story has too many prepositions to be clear:

David Drummond, one of the three law enforcement officers acquitted Saturday in the drowning deaths of three black youths here, stood by his pickup truck Monday at his home by the railroad tracks in Grosbeck and slowly, in a voice void of emotion, said, "It feels good."

4. When recasting a sentence for clarity, look for the subject-verb-object relationship. Take out the passive voice. Recast cliches into language fashioned for this occasion only. Don't back into the sentence with unnecessary clauses or clauses that should come later in the sentence, if at all.

5. Don't pack the lead. Specificity is wonderful, but where you can't be specific without burdening the lead, choose a general, clear statement and support it with specifics in subsequent paragraphs.

Creative devices

Once the underpinnings of clarity are in place, you can turn your attention to more decorative elements. Good, clear writing can become great writing through simple linguistic devices—through metaphorical, descriptive, and poetic language.

Skillful writers frequently depend on figurative language to add color, energy, and depth to their work. They excel at original, evocative, and appropriate metaphors and similes.

That word *original* is important: There's no shortage of metaphor. But just grabbing what's available rather than creating fresh, figurative language will yield writing that is trite or hackneyed. And good writers are *never* hackneyed: They do their own work.

Good figurative images needn't be—probably *shouldn't* be—intricate or involved. They need only be natural and visual and right. *Dallas Morning News* sports columnist David Casstevens, for example, writes of a man whose voice "sounds like a slow ride down a gravel road" or of a boxing gym where heavy bags hang from the ceiling "like giant sausages."

Blackie Sherrod, another *Morning News* sports columnist, is a particularly skillful creator of simile and metaphor. "Here was Marciano," he writes, "chin jutting like a dreadnought bearing down on a U-boat . . . . His stubby fingers still flailed like a furious turtle." One of Blackie's subjects is "as supple as a buggy whip"; another is "as colorful as a dump truck."

Some metaphors are quick takes, dispensed economically to enliven a passage. "The show runs like a new Mercedes," writes one reporter. And, to another, handling an infant giraffe is "like tangling with a gangly, spring-loaded pile of bamboo." When one writer's TV went out, it "sounded like an angry cat spitting into a radiator." And a music critic writes: "Bach's vaulting, cathedral-like score was

reduced to a picky, pale semblance of itself, with notes ticked off like numbers on a speedometer."

Be careful, however, not to overdo figurative language. *The New Yorker* often publishes amusing excesses, which it labels "Block That Metaphor!" For instance:

"All we're doing is taking the agenda that's out there and maybe trying to put it under a different umbrella. That's not meaning that you drop pieces of it out, but maybe just refocus it a little bit so that you're driving more toward specific areas than a lot of piecemeal things," Gibson said.

A restrained and appropriate sprinkling of metaphor yields suggestive work; a liberal larding produces garble. There's probably excessive figurative expression if the reader starts paying more attention to the metaphors than to the message.

Devices such as alliteration, assonance, and onomatopoeia also add flair and flavor to writing. An example is this lead by David Hanners, a *Dallas Morning News* reporter and Pulitzer Prize winner:

They sought refuge from the sweltering heat in the shade of an arthritic old oak tree, but mostly they sought refuge from the tribulations of life. For the mourners of Bill Mayberry, neither came easy Tuesday morning.

The sibilance of the repeated S in the first sentence and the resonance of the N and M sounds in the second sentence soften the lead and add a certain elegiac melancholy. (In this way, we say that the *sound* of a passage echoes its *sense*.) The assonance in "old oak" is attractive, and "arthritic" is a descriptive and particularly appropriate adjective for this cemetery setting.

The following passage by David Casstevens is wonderful—chiefly because of its strong, precise, and alliterative words.

Another trainer was busily at work, taping Hatcher's paws. There was the shriek of the adhesive, drawn in bursts off its spool, the flurry of Hatcher's fists as he spun the tape around them.

Look at the number of soft, hissing, or whispering sounds in that passage. David's vocabulary here imitates the sound of the tape's being whisked from its spool.

Such devices as alliteration, sibilance, assonance, resonance, and onomatopoeia do come naturally to good writers. But you can also use them deliberately to make a passage more interesting.

The chief dangers of using such techniques consciously rather than instinctively are that the result may seem artificial and you might not know when to stop. Too much of any of these devices makes the product ludicrous—and the line between too much and just enough is extremely thin. "Picked Pimple Pops," a headline on a medical column, is an illustration of the ludicrous (and in this case *gross*) result of too much alliteration.

Descriptive writing

Good writers know how to describe people, places, things, and actions so that the reader can see them too. They create pictures with words. And because carefully chosen words carry great force, word pictures are often stronger than the sight of the real thing.

The primary principle of good description is showing rather than telling. Telling may alienate the readers, who generally consider themselves as capable as the writer of judgment and interpretation. Telling also fails to create an immediate and vivid mental image—it simply offers a conclusion, which readers find difficult to accept because it's not *their* conclusion.

Music critic Russell Smith might have contented himself with writing that his subject looked like the typical British rock star. Instead, he shows us:

The hair is a mess, the familiar jet-black rooster cut reduced to a confused, slept-on snarl. The chalky-white complexion shows no signs of ever having seen sunlight. A whopper of a nose dominates the long, rubbery face, and he looks almost like a caricature of the quintessential British rock star.

He looks great. Like a Rolling Stone.

The three kinds of description are straight, static, and action. Straight description describes what is actually visible, as in the Smith passage above. Static description uses figurative visual devices, as in William Faulkner's: "Her eyes, lost in the fatty ridges of her face, looked like two pieces of coal pressed into a lump of dough."

Action descriptions are challenging, dynamic, and often attractive. Witness this charming descriptive passage from David Casstevens:

In the world of track and field, which itself is specialized, we have distance walkers. You've seen them on TV. Lank of frame, painters caps on their heads, they go strutting out of the stadium shortly after dawn and aren't heard from again for two days, when they finally reappear in the arena, arms pumping, elbows rotating, still heel-toeing to beat the band, looking no worse for wear than when they left.

"Words, when well chosen," said playwright Joseph Addison, "have so great a force in them that a description often gives us more lively ideas than the sight of things themselves." That's what happens when good writing goes great: Through clear, brief, accurate, and evocative prose, it tells us more than a thousand pictures.

Paula LaRocque is assistant managing editor and writing coach at the Dallas Morning News. *She is a nationally known authority on effective writing and a highly rated instructor at CASE's annual Writing Institute.*

Return of the Living Dull

Freshen stale publications by updating your vision, methods, and attitude
by Elise Hancock

Here it comes again—your 10th commencement story, your 14th viewbook. How can you keep your words and pictures fresh? And how can you tell if they're not?

Staleness is always apparent in someone else's publications: You just don't want to read that thing, because you know at a glance you already have. However good the technical quality, that viewbook—or magazine, or poster—wears a deadly familiarity.

In your own publications, staleness is harder to see. It feels comfortable, and you can justify it as consistency, or policy, or "our image" and "the way we do things here." To the reader, though, it's the same old stuff.

What can you do to avoid the staleness trap?

Eternal vigilance. Awareness is half the battle, says John Bethell, editor of *Harvard Magazine* since 1966 and five-time winner of CASE's Sibley Magazine of the Year award. "If you're working very hard at making each issue surprising, it's hard to go stale." With Harvard aplomb, he offers a tag from Seneca: *Pars sanitatis velle sanari fuit* ("The wish to be cured is itself a step toward health").

Be wary of the words "always" and "never." The longer you've been on the job, the more mental habits you have: "We always run a calendar. . . . Our catalogs are always 6 by 9. . . . We never cover that sort of thing. . . ."

Sez who? Whenever you hear a voice in your mind saying "always" or "never," stop and ask yourself why. You had a reason once, no doubt, but does the reason still hold?

Critique your work systematically. Schedule regular meetings every few months at which you gather up your staff—or colleagues if you're a one-person staff—and have at it. In the recent issues, what works? What doesn't? What would you now do differently? Be courteous but frank.

Beware the tapering off that too often befalls this sort of meeting. Everyone knows critiquing is a great idea—but such analysis never looks as urgent as today's onrushing deadline. So you reschedule, then cancel because so much time has gone by, and pretty soon your regular meetings are history. Too bad. In the long run, nothing can be more helpful.

The CASE competitions are a golden opportunity for you and your staff, because preparing the entry will force you to view your whole year's work with the beady, unaffectionate gaze of a judge. You'll build consensus if you ask each staff member to think independently and then plan your entries as a group. Take several days, and don't just scan the material—read it. What's the best? What's the worst? I am often surprised at both answers. Are there any big omissions in your coverage? Does the actual work fulfill your statement of purpose? What do you want to do if it doesn't?

This exercise may or may not improve your CASE entry for the current year, but it surely will for next year.

Pick the right boss. A boss who knows what you're doing, understands the long-term importance of periodicals and publications to the institution, "and also has the will to stand up and support the editor" (phrase from Dusty Rhodes) is a precious gem. If you find such a person, take the job. You may, like Rhodes, editor of the Sibley-winning *Brown Alumni Monthly,* stay there 18 years.

One of the boss's key roles is protecting the creative zest of the editors by protecting them from politics. "The thing that gets me down isn't the work so much as the fight," says one editor. "I could do the work forever—I've always been a publications junkie. But when there are great negotiations to go through, when the subject is threatening to go to the president, or when you have a department chair who's demanding to see a professor's quote—then I always say I'm going to go down to the farm to pick peas. You just get tired of it."

Let others help. Norman Darais can't say enough for the synergistic approach he's developed with his art director: "We give and take and build upon each other's ideas, so ideas are created by both of us. We don't have preconceived notions; we get in and bat things back and forth."

For the last eight of his 13 years in the business, Darais has been director of publications at Brigham Young University. At the weekly staff meeting, he and his colleagues will often "put a project down on the table and freewheel, let ideas flow and write everything down." It's important not to judge ideas at the moment but just to keep 'em coming.

Darais has found that the best ideas often come from people who work outside the project or even supposedly outside the creative areas—like the office manager.

Look at the best work around the country. That's universal advice, voiced by every editor and publications director I talked with. Look at work from corporations, CASE colleagues, *Communication Arts,* the newsstand. Comparing your work with the best will sharpen your eye. Of CASE colleagues, says Don Pattison, director of public affairs at Pomona College, "We have similar mandates, similar alumni bodies, so it can work to borrow and go beyond. It can help us come up with new approaches."

Surround yourself with young people. On magazines, many senior editors deliberately keep their staff turning over by hiring writers at the entry level. Says Dusty Rhodes, "A new writer brings a new style, a new personality, a little zest."

Veteran editors agree it's crucial not to indoctrinate new staffers with the old approach. Do not, repeat do not, show them the old stories. "I'd rather have somebody take a fresh view," says Rhodes. "Heaven knows when it comes to stories like commencement we need a fresh view."

Try different ways of working. This generation of editors has been blessed by a technical revolution: The computer has forced us to change our ways. "It's made me a better editor and a better administrator," says John Bethell. "Soon I hope it will make me a better designer."

Think topical. A story you could have run last year will not be read this year. Stay up with the public mood and interests.

To run timely material, you must work close to deadlines, something computers make possible even for small staffs. Bethell remembers the days when his magazine was a monthly. (It's now published six times a year.) "We were juggling like mad, improvising, there was so much adrenalin rush in the thing." And though the improvising sometimes led to small disasters, it also made for a fresh, surprising magazine. Bethell believes the computer, by allowing editors to work to the last minute and handle topical stories, will allow some of that urgency to reappear in alumni publishing.

Take ideas where you find them. The best ideas often come from your private life; for example, idle conversation at a cocktail party can give you a terrific story idea. Ideas come from alumni too—one of many constituencies with which you must keep more than nodding contact. Be sure to carry a notebook to jot these things down.

Get out and around the campus. Says Rhodes, "It sounds like a cliche. But the continual change of stories and people and the campus really will keep you from going stale." Even after 18 years at Brown and 39 years in the business, he says, "there's always something different."

But to find that freshness, you can't stay in the four walls of your office.

Maintain your personal spirit. Go bicycling or hiking, advises Norm Darais. "Don't get so wrapped up in the job," echoes Bethell. "Have another interest, or travel." A changing, growing human being will produce a changing, growing magazine.

Change places. Don Pattison of Pomona College has worked at four institutions in 23 years. He's sampled a Canadian university, two big public California universities, and now a small private college. He's also jumped types of work, from publications to graduate studies, public affairs, a magazine. . .all of it. He values the "wide perspective" and finds the variety invigorating.

Dusty Rhodes, too, has worked at four institutions and cannot imagine working 39 years at only one.

Get away for some months. Pattison urges job swapping for three- to six-month periods to freshen the jaded wordsmith. "We become too close to our own institution's readers and need critical adjustment from outside," he says. The opportunity to learn someone else's campus and struggle with someone else's professional problems will send you back to your own world with a new perspective.

The idea of sabbaticals for administrators is becoming reality on at least one campus. At Harvard, sabbaticals will soon be available to senior magazine personnel after 15 years: a half year on full salary or a full year on half salary. Bethell has been granted a sabbatical of his own to begin later this year. "After 15 years," he says simply, "you need it."

Keep tinkering. Marsha Scott Gori, editor of *Bucknell World,* says that 'the moment I come off the presses is the most exhilarating and the most demoralizing, because I find *real* ways I can improve."

Your news section is too long and has too little room for pictures? Don't wait. Slash the copy for the very next issue. When something begins to seem bad to you, act on it. If you consciously and deliberately tinker, continually making small improvements, your periodical is sure to evolve with the times.

Elise Hancock is the editor of the award-winning Johns Hopkins Magazine *at Johns Hopkins University, a small research university in Baltimore, Maryland.*

A Fresh Bill of Fare

Editors share their best solutions for beating the what-to-fix-for-deadline blues
by Linda Keith

Serving up features that will tempt readers' literary palates is seldom a piece of cake. So we sampled a variety of alumni magazines and tabloids and talked to editors from California to Connecticut looking for features you could whip up in your own editorial kitchens. With their help, we put together this menu of their best ideas.

"Gotta-do's"

Here are some fresh angles on the old, standard topics nearly every alumni editor has to cover.

• *Capital campaigns.* Graphics and charts often can replace less-than-exciting prose. Joyce Muller, editor of *The Hill,* filled a timeline with photographs, short copy blocks, and watercolor illustrations to tell the story of Western Maryland College's successful two-year capital campaign.

• *Research.* Focus on the end, not the means. To highlight research on campus, Utah State University's *Outlook* Editor Cliff Cahoon featured businesses that evolved out of research conducted at Utah State.

• *Alumni chapters.* People like to read about people. So Wichita State University reported the opening of its Washington, DC, chapter via a personality profile on the chapter president.

• *Ribbon-cuttings.* Look for the story behind the event. Instead of covering the dedication of a new building in *Hawken Review,* Diane Goodman, director of publications at Hawken School, writes about the life and service of the person for whom the building is named.

• *Potpourri.* Often the best approach isn't an article. You can turn a thousand words into pictures and cutlines or reduce news releases to one-paragraph briefs—and give this potpourri a regular spot in your periodical. Some examples: "Spotlight" in *Boston University Today,* "Marginalia" in the Gazetteer section of *Pennsylvania Gazette,* "Around the Lake" in the *University of Richmond Magazine,* and "Portereporter" in *The Bulletin of Miss Porter's School.*

Profiles

When you need to introduce a new face on campus—or want to remind readers about the old faces—consider one of these approaches.

• *Alumni.* Stories about interesting alumni speak well for your academic programs. In Ohio State University's *Quest*, a veterinarian described how she deals with the deaths of animals she treats, a superintendent spoke out about teacher competency and merit pay, and an aviation psychologist gave readers a first-hand account of the U.S. investigation of the Aeromexico crash.

• *Volunteers.* To honor volunteers, ask them *why* they do what they do. You may be surprised at the answers—and their rationale may give nonvolunteers reasons to join the effort. *Indiana Alumni* quoted three top Indiana University fund-raising volunteers. One of them pointed out: "IU's scientists might have been responsible for medical knowledge that helped heal a loved one. The teacher who inspired our child to master math may be an IU grad. The ways IU touches our lives seem endless."

• *Professors.* Start with an outside voice. *Boston College Magazine* and *University Report* from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill both asked former students to write about how certain professors affected their lives. Or, if the professor is well-known, ask faculty members from other institutions to talk about him or her, suggests Bill Noblitt, director of university relations at Rice University.

• *Trustees.* Let the trustee's friends provide the material you need. To introduce a new board chair, *Connecticut College Alumni Magazine* published a "Galloping Poll" consisting of two- and three-sentence quotes from people—an ex-trustee, the college president, and her children, among others—who knew her.

• *Students.* Acquaint alumni with current students with a survey. Suzanne Johnson left "Big Brother Wants to Know" questionnaires in students' mailboxes in Rice University residential colleges. The resulting *Sallyport* article, "Taking the Student Pulse," described students' opinions about campus and national issues as well as their personal interests.

• *Big guns.* For profiles of well-known alumni and donors, tell the truth. *Bowdoin Alumni Magazine* editor Charles Calhoun got remarkable response from a feature on an alumnus art collector/Wall Street wizard simply by "telling the truth, warts and all."

• *Honorees.* For recipients of honorary degrees, print their citation verbatim. A well-written citation makes a nice change of pace from the usual biographical sketch, says Nancy Smith, editor of *Wesleyan Alumnus.*

Annual events

Some events occur every year—whether you're ready with a new angle or not. Try these nontraditional techniques for traditional events:

• *Graduation.* Linda Whipple of Franklin and Marshall College used pictures of proud parents and grandparents snapping photos of their graduates. They appeared in *F&M Today* under the headline "Here's Looking at You, Kid."

• *Homecoming. University of Louisville Alumni Magazine* commissioned a musicology doctoral student to count down the top pop songs that might have been heard at homecoming dances for the past 40 years.

• *Reunion.* For the Class of '36's 50th reunion, *Swarthmore College Bulletin* had one class member, a sociologist, ask his classmates about their marriages, children, financial rewards, retirement status, volunteer work, quality of life, and opinions on public issues. And at St. Edward's University, *Alumni News* ran photos of favorite old eating, drinking, and dancing establishments—places alumni want to revisit when they're back in town.

• *Phonathon.* The Randolph-Macon College *Bulletin* used a theater theme in "Setting the Stage for Success." The writer established the scene in three paragraphs before switching to dialogue of what Ben, a R-M student, and Mr. Jones, an alumnus, might have said to one another.

• *Start of the school year. The Mount* at College of Mount St. Joseph marked the end of break by asking professors to tell "What I Did on My Summer Vacation." The faculty authors shared observations and photographs from their summer field research in China and India.

• *End of the school year.* The University of Toronto's *Alumni Magazine* turned the obligatory mention of summer recess into a pleasant description of quiet cafeterias, fathers loading stereos and racquets into cars, and bare dorm windows that the day before were filled with parting messages.

Gimmicks

If you want to find out who's out there, these quick methods will get readers to write back.

• *Quizzes.* A full-page Christmas Quiz filled with campus trivia, history, and alumni and faculty notes greeted readers of the December issue of the University of Melbourne *Gazette.* In another quiz, *K-Stater* mixed campus trivia with questions that just happened to inform alumni about association programs and publications.

• *Puzzles.* Alumni create acrostics for *Bowdoin Alumni Magazine.* The first reader to return the correctly completed puzzle wins a prize.

• *Contests.* West Virginia University *Alumni Magazine* editor Harry Ernst printed small photos of carvings and embellishments and asked readers to identify what campus building they're on. He also asked for name, address, major, and class on the entry form so WVU could update alumni records at the same time. Washington College *Reporter* prints unidentified photos from alumni archives and invites readers to identify the people. Readers enjoy reminiscing, and the alumni association can catalog its collection.

• *Sports.* If your campus ever claimed a favorite sport, you can bet alumni still play. *Pomona Today* got lots of good laughs by asking readers to send in their best times from any 10K race run during the previous year. One man's personal best was two days, 23 hours, 59 minutes, and eight seconds. Another claimed .01 better than a classmate because "I was always one step ahead of Art in college."

• *"Best" lists.* Texas Tech University borrowed an idea from *Texas Monthly* and created "The Best of Texas Tech." Editors invited readers to add their own categories or to challenge the whimsical plaudits they handed out, such as "Best Paradox" (bricks falling off the College of Architecture building) and "Best Pair o' Docs" (two top research scholars in the electrical engineering department).

• *"Best-ever" lists.* Ask readers to stretch their imaginations on a timeless topic. The Alumni Magazine Consortium of seven eastern colleges and universities invited readers to nominate the world's greatest inven-

tions. Answers included the serious and the humorous. At Union College in New York State, editors asked readers to list history's most influential people and defend their choices. *Union College* published the best answers and rewarded the winners with books.

• *Photo requests.* St. George's School in Rhode Island asked alumni to contribute photographs to help build the school's archives. Contributors received credit in subsequent issues of *St. George's.*

Thoughtful responses

For in-depth articles alumni can take personal interest in, ask readers to send in their thoughts and opinions. For example:

• *Hobbies.* Punning on the name of *Collection,* the alumni magazine of Friends School in Baltimore, Editor Melinda Burdette asked readers what they collected. Besides making good copy and drawing response from otherwise-silent readers, the project helped identify several prospects for the development and alumni staff, Burdette says.

• *School spirit.* Ask readers why their alma mater shines. *At Rennselaer* published successful alumni's opinions on why Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute was the best place they could have gone to college.

• *Campus folklore.* Alice Snyder, editor of Northwestern University's *Alumni News,* ran a story on campus myths and legends and asked her readers to send in their own versions.

• *Success stories. Illinois Alumni News* editor Nancy McKinney Gilmore sent out an invitation in her March 1987 issue for University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign alumni to describe their less-than-traditional paths to success. The responses will become material for a theme issue.

• *Current issues.* Editors at Claremont McKenna College put a business reply postcard in every issue of *Profile* to gather readers' opinions. The spring 1987 issue asked "Is it possible to be both a good parent and a successful careerist? Which is more important to you?" The answers provide the material for "Feedback," a regular department in the magazine. The reply card also allows space for readers to suggest future "Feedback" topics and to jot class notes and address changes.

Places to look

To generate your own story ideas, check out these ready sources from both on-campus and off:

• *Conferences.* Watch for meetings scheduled on your campus. Ask conference planners to alert you to topics that might have general appeal. You may want to tape the best sessions and lift excerpts for your readers.

• *Speeches.* Ask top administrators and faculty members to notify you of speeches they're giving. If you find a topic that will have broad interest among your readers, you can summarize the speech, ask the speaker to rewrite it for print, or interview the person on the same topic.

• *Academic departments.* Ask department heads to be your eyes and ears. At Utah State University, *Outlook* writers offer to speak at periodic department meetings to educate professors about what makes news. Their receptiveness pays off in 20 to 30 hot tips a year.

• *Publications.* Get hold of lists of faculty publications. Look for topics of general appeal and work with the author to adapt them for your audience. For example, *Notre Dame Magazine* based its article "What Children Teach Their Parents" on a professor's book.

• *Calendars.* Plan well in advance to dovetail your features with anniversaries and events of universal appeal. For example, *Pomona Today* ran a feature "Not Hollywood's Africa" to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the Peace Corps.

• *Archives. Texas Techsan* at Texas Tech researched early student organizations and found archival photos to accompany the findings. New York State's *Union College* found "Rules for Freshmen" published in 1942 and reprinted them for many reader laughs.

• *Libraries.* Special-collections librarians might point you toward interesting classes, research projects, or campus treasures—and they can lead you to the experts who can write about those topics.

• *Mass media.* Link your campus events and experts to national and international news. George Beezer, editor of *Lehigh Alumni Bulletin,* has run articles on topics ranging from campus drinking to corporate takeovers.

Linda Keith is an editor and writer in the Office of Information Services at Utah State University, a public institution of 15,000 students in Logan, Utah. She was CURRENTS' editorial intern for the 1986-87 academic year.

The Best Medicine

Faculty authors can pump new life into your campus periodical
by Thomas M. Flagg

By the summer of 1984 we knew we had to do something with *Inside Out,* the news/feature tabloid of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The five-year-old periodical, which goes to UNLV's faculty, staff, alumni, and friends, had what advertising writers used to call "tired blood." Our editorial staff—the three of us who write everything that comes out of the Office of Information Services—were suffering from creative anemia.

Meeting in July to plan the four issues that would appear during the coming academic year, we agreed that the best way to rejuvenate *Inside Out* would be to get new writers. Our luck with free-lancers was so bad that I'd already asked our director to buy me a deer rifle to use on them. But there was one source of authors we'd scarcely tapped—our university's faculty.

Three advantages to using faculty authors were obvious: They're inexpensive (or free, depending on your policy), they're convenient, and they're connected to the institution.

But we had strong editorial grounds as well. New voices, we reasoned, would demonstrate our university's diversity. And first-hand articles by authorities would build reader interest in our academic and research programs as well as in the tabloid itself.

Our hunch paid off. In the past few years, we've discovered these specific benefits of faculty-written articles:

- If you've been running mostly class notes and updates on the annual fund, your readers will be glad to meet new faculty and get reacquainted with professors they remember.
- Readers enjoy, for example, an eyewitness account by a geology professor who led a group to the slopes of Kilimanjaro more than the hearsay of a staff-written story. And they begin to see your faculty as a group of enthusiastic, active people with interesting information to share.
- Articles by experts make your periodical more authoritative, and, in turn, more respected.
- Faculty members gain an understanding of how your periodical contributes to the institution's overall mission. Your professionalism gains recognition in new quarters.
- Professors are quite pleased with themselves—as we all are—when their work is published and read by their colleagues. This is particularly important if your campus morale needs a lift.

Finding faculty authors

Our first step was to find willing faculty authors—at least one per issue, we hoped. Identifying teachers and researchers whose work might lead to interesting articles was easy. The sources were right on my desk: a speakers bureau brochure, a class schedule, the continuing education catalog, my news release file, UNLV's faculty media directory, and the "faculty activities" section of our weekly campus newsletter.

These are all printed sources. Equally important were (and are) personal acquaintances and the campus grapevine. Our College of Arts and Letters provided another rich source in 1985 when it established a lecture series and began publishing schedules of speakers and topics for each semester.

The difficulty, then, wasn't *finding* potential authors. It was getting them to write for us.

For several years we had been asking faculty members to write articles, but few were interested. The ones we asked directly usually said they were too busy or didn't think they could write in our style. We made several general appeals through memos to all faculty, but most didn't respond.

So in all this time, we'd printed only two or three faculty-written articles—the most notable being a piece on the national economy by one of our economics professors that appeared in March 1981. An oddity at the time, it helped me almost three years later to sell other professors on the idea of contributing to *Inside Out*.

The increasing national media coverage of political and social conditions in Central America prompted our first big splash of faculty writing. I approached the chair of UNLV's Latin American Studies Committee, who liked the thought of a special issue featuring his field. He invited me to the committee's next meeting to present the idea and recruit writers.

At the meeting I talked about my desire to publish faculty-written articles. I showed the professors the 1981 economics piece as an example of how they might expect their pieces to appear. As it turned out, they needed little convincing. Four of the seven committee members volunteered, and I gave them a week to choose subjects. The topics we ultimately agreed on did not present a comprehensive view of Central America, but neither did they overlap.

Coincidentally, as I was preparing this issue, two additional faculty members came to me with article ideas—quite a new development! One was the dean of the School of Medicine. I was glad for this contribution because I was eager to publicize the school's recent takeover of the county-run hospital in Las Vegas. The other professor had just returned from a trip to Hunza—the Shangri-La of the book *Lost Horizon*—and was dying to write about her trip. How could I say no?

The six articles appeared in the November/December 1984 issue of *Inside Out*. The issue did have a few problems. For instance, one of the stories, on linguistics, was too academic for a general audience. I worked with the writer to improve it, but the topic and his approach were dry at best. I used the story because there was no graceful way to spike it.

But even with such difficulties, the issue caught the faculty's attention. I suddenly started getting lots of favorable comments in the elevator in our building and in the locker room at the gym. More important, though, we'd set a precedent. Faculty began to see us as a viable—and desirable—way to publicize their work, and finding authors became easier.

I developed a straightforward method of approaching potential authors. If I know the professor well—and I do know most of the ones who've written for me—I ask, "What are you up to lately?" (If I have to show a bit of deference, I modify that to "What have you been working on?") When faculty members have a story to tell, it comes out. I let them talk long enough to work up some enthusiasm—that is, long enough to hook themselves. Then, assuming they have an interesting story, I tell them so and ask if they'd like to write an article for *Inside Out*.

Some agree immediately; some refuse right away, usually because of busy schedules and other commitments. As for the ones who are hesitant, I have a few inducements. I tell them their work will be seen by at least 20,000 readers. And I mention that I pay $75—our standard free-lance fee. The latter tack is quite effective with those who have the time but aren't sure they want to make the effort. For most writers, though, the chance to contribute is reward enough. In fact, a few professors have actually refused the fee.

In the three years since we decided to include more faculty writers in *Inside Out*, we've published 36 pieces by professors from all corners of the university. Faculty write as many as four features per issue, and I get more article proposals than I'm able to accept. Topics have ranged from mammoth fossils to Leonardo da Vinci to casino gaming in Europe.

Preventing the problems

Of course, you ask for some problems when you solicit articles from your faculty.

The biggest difficulty with many, though by no means all, of the professors I've worked with is persuading them to write in a nonscholarly style. The next most vexing problem is getting them to grasp the concept of deadlines. And finally, when they turn in something too convoluted to print and too late to fix, professors require

more delicate handling than thick-skinned free-lancers do.

Here are the solutions I've come up with for each of these difficulties:

• *Writing and editing.* Getting faculty contributors to write in a semi-journalistic style can tax an editor's tact and creativity. This five-step process, with variations to fit the circumstances, has produced good results:

1. When you solicit a piece, make sure the author has a clear fix on the topic and understands that he or she is writing for an educated lay audience. While there's no need to write down to your periodical's readers, the author should not assume they have a specialist's background in the topic.

2. When you receive the manuscript, make two copies.

3. Edit the piece, using the first copy to scribble on while you think about the piece and consider changes. Aim for clarity and vigor, but resist the editor's urge to "clean up" the manuscript to the point where it sounds as if you wrote it. It's all right if your readers have to look up a word now and then.

4. On your clean copy, make brief notes to remind yourself of questions and suggestions. Use this copy when you meet with the writer to discuss revisions. The discussion will get off to a bad start if the professor sees his or her work marked up more severely than a student's paper.

5. Meet with the author. I usually show writers the edited version and ask for their approval. Sometimes they make minor changes; sometimes they say it's fine the way it is. With particularly specialized pieces, I'll sit down with the writer and go through the major points, asking him or her to clarify sections that might mystify the readers. This is also the time to offer suggestions on style and organization. It helps to know in advance which points you feel strongly about and which you are willing to bargain away. The correct mix of tact and firmness here will convince the writer that you're helping him or her communicate with your readers.

This method was cumbersome at first, partly because I was being careful to ease the writers into our system and partly because I felt a bit intimidated by my relative position on the totem pole. Now many of the faculty members have become accustomed to working with me and have written for me more than once. Not only does this mean their copy requires less work, but the familiarity has put us on an equal footing.

• *Deadlines.* Set deadlines as far in advance as possible, but at least a week before you actually need the copy. A day or two after you make the assignment and agree on a deadline, send the writer a memo briefly outlining the agreement. Ask the writer to call if a problem arises, and tell him or her you'll be in touch.

Call or stop by the writer's office as the deadline approaches, just to see how things are coming along. If it looks like the article won't be done by Monday, as promised, be gracious, but let the writer know you absolutely must have it by Thursday. He or she will be so thankful that you will probably get it on Wednesday.

• *Rejections.* The best way to avoid the unpleasant task of turning down an article is to take preventive action. If you have made the assignment clear and worked with the author to produce a final draft, you should have no problem. True, not every story will be a prize-winner. But if the piece interests readers and presents the author and your institution in a favorable light, it will have served its purpose.

When the worst occurs and you just cannot use a piece, you still might have a few options. For instance, once I received a good piece that dealt with a topic similar to another story in that issue. I gave the author the option of letting us hold it for a later issue or trying to place it in the local press. (He chose the former.) When a piece is inappropriate for *Inside Out,* I suggest the author try to place it in another campus publication, a special-interest magazine, or a local newspaper's Sunday supplement.

If the article needs a rewrite, I ask for one. Usually the author complies happily. If he or she doesn't, I drop the piece. Once—when I really needed the article—I did the rewrite myself.

Only twice have I had to reject an article entirely. In one case, the writer understood that her story just didn't fit the publication. She has since written two good pieces for us. In the other case, the writer was simply promoting his program—which in itself was not a problem, save that the piece was poorly written. He took offense at the rejection, but he still sends me information on his program.

Fruitful feedback

It's become obvious that our focus on faculty contributions has accomplished what we'd hoped. Most reader response is verbal, and we hear it secondhand—from the authors. For example, a long-time faculty member who wrote a story on the old days at UNLV got quite a few calls from former students who remembered when the institution was known as "Tumbleweed Tech." She passed the compliments on to me.

One of our best indicators of *Inside Out*'s growing popularity is the number of requests we get from people who want to be on the mailing list. We get requests from Nevada and beyond; in fact, the list has grown so much that we've been running short of extra issues for our files. One issue on creative writing, which included a short story and a poem by faculty writers, virtually disappeared from the office—more than 100 extra copies got snatched up in two weeks.

After that issue appeared, faculty and graduate students began telling me they wished they'd known we were planning the issue—because they'd have submitted work. In fact, I started receiving short stories from all over campus as well as from people elsewhere who wondered if we were planning something similar in the future. This issue generated so much interest that I was able to talk the vice president for academic affairs, who had already written a complimentary letter, into sponsoring an anthology of short fiction by Nevada writers—including some from our faculty.

But perhaps the most rewarding feedback we get is from faculty members themselves. I no longer have to work to sell professors on the idea of writing for us. And sometimes they call me before I call them.

Thomas M. Flagg is news bureau manager at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, a public institution of nearly 19,000 students. He recently published the last issue of Inside Out *and is planning a new magazine for fall 1991.*

Electrifying Science

How to turn up the voltage and bring research news to life

by Roger Martin

The question hung between me and the CURRENTS editor. Would I write a story about making science come alive?

An image leaped to my mind: the monster taking voltage on the lab table, Doc Frankenstein hovering near and thinking, "Gotta get this big old dead thing moving." That's what brightening science is like for me—juicing something dead until it lives.

It's no surprise that I got an image from this story idea. Word pictures are the blood and marrow of science reporting, according to 10 science editors and writers who won CASE Recognition awards in 1990. Rather than being a window—with source on one side, reader on the other—a science reporter must be a prism. Refractive writers twice bend what they are told—first by simplifying the science, then by coloring it with metaphor and analogy.

Is every science subject doable? Most of my colleagues said yes. One even spoke of the "intrinsic life and beauty" in a topic like differential equations. But I say no. I think it's impossible to jump-start some monsters. I weaken at the mention of Boolean algebra or particles with spin and strangeness. Give me cells, not quarks.

I remember a newspaper science-page mogul who spoke at a CASE conference in the early '80s on communicating university research. He acknowledged that health and creature features have high audience appeal but also noted the need, in the name of "responsibility," to do less sexy stories on such topics as ozone-layer damage. I think that many of us on campus must explain science that's even less arresting than ozone holes.

The editors I talked to agree. "Ninety percent of what university people write about is not news," says Harlan Berger, contributing editor of *Research/Penn State*. "Let's not treat it as news by trying to ape a newspaper or AP wire story." What we can do instead is keep things simple and lively.

Getting the story straight

Before we even think about brightening our prose, we have to find out just what the research we're describing entails. Understanding the science is a prerequisite for bringing it to life.

"I picked up my knowledge of science out of the gutter," says Geoffrey Leavenworth, a former editor of *Biomedical Inquiry* at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston who's now a free-lance writer. "That's where most people learn about sex, but that doesn't stop them from developing an appreciation for it."

Adapting a persona of ignorance is common among campus science writers. As researchers yack on about the cytochrome P-450 enzyme system, we scratch our heads and go, "Gork?" Our ignorance is blessed. We're as science-dumb as the public, and we serve that public by prodding scientists to simplify.

Conrad Storad, editor of *Arizona State University Research*, spells it out for ASU jargon masters. He asks them, "Why don't you think of me as your 8-year-old who's asked, 'Hey, Dad, what the heck do you do at work?' "

Jon Franklin, twice a Pulitzer Prize winner for his science features at the *Baltimore Evening Sun*, has said that asking scientists what they *discovered* usually produces a different answer from asking what they *did*. He emphasizes the doing.

If the scientist ignores your plea for simplicity, be rude. I halt people in mid-sentence or mid-word. Confusion compounds too quickly if you delay. Interviewing scientists takes a while, so I schedule two hours, not one, and count on follow-up calls.

A caveat: In your quest for intelligibility, you can go too far. When I read some research stories, I feel lost in minutiae, as if I'm seeing the stitches on the monster's neck but not its entire head. Reporters have to back up until they see the whole scientific process, not just the end result.

To get the big picture, the question-asking child in me prods the scientist until the gee-whiz facts pour forth. In a story about engineers who study cement-paste cracking and steel fracture, for example, I began with grade-school questions. I asked the engineers to contrast concrete and steel in as many ways as they could.

Other large-scale questions worth asking: How has your research meandered over the last 20 years? How would an opponent attack you?

It helps to take one of the scientist's colleagues aside. Marshall Ledger, *Penn Medicine*'s editor, says that the colleague may "explain that there are traditionally approaches A, B, and C to studying diabetes, and this scientist has chosen C." The background information you get can help put the researcher's work in context.

The best advice, really, is never stop asking questions. Says Carole Jaworski, editor of *Nor'easter*, representing the Northeast Sea Grant Programs: "The way not to be dull is to keep the wonder in yourself alive."

Telling the tales

Once you've prodded the scientists for facts, it's time to write. There are two main strategies for gussying up research prose.

1. *Tell a story.* Give the science a structure—with a beginning, a middle, and an end—and flesh out those parts with the most interesting material you can come up with. Document the research stops and starts, the incidents serendipitous and strange.

"Focus on researchers' inductive leaps and happy landings, their mistakes and breakthroughs," says Irene Dortch, editor of the University of Alabama at Birmingham's *Medical Center*. As you tell your tale, consider the following elements.

- *Detail.* The sights and smells and sounds of the laboratory merit attention; so do the precise names of things. The engineer doesn't use any old saw to cut a cross section of concrete; it's a Buhler low-speed wafering saw.

Likewise, say more about researchers than where they got their doctorates or their grants. "Weave into the story something personal about the scientist," advises Ledger at *Penn Medicine*.

• *Length.* To make a complex subject manageable, Editor Janet Worthington at *Hopkins Medical News* takes care not to present the reader with an unforgiving page of type. She relies on subheads, captions, and pull-out quotes to draw the reader in. She also breaks stories into blocks.

That's my practice, too. We live in the Age of the Sidebar; blocks pay heed to our shortened attention spans.

• *Tone.* I spike headlines and subheads with the casual, the colloquial, and the humorous to undo expectations that because I'm in PR, or Kansas, I'll be earnest. I want the appearance of distance between me and my sources. Worthington says that "readers are able to pick out blatant PR flack." Therefore, don't puff your institution as being among the nation's top 19.

But don't condescend, either. Says David Bracey, editor of the University of Cincinnati Medical Center's *Discovery*, "We are not pedagogical. We don't start, 'Lesson one: Open your books, children.' "

Jump-starting the Art

Creative strategies for giving science a visual charge

Some people say you attract readers to science with photos, illustrations, and cartoons. Art, in other words, is the marquee that draws the audience into the theater.

"What I assume people do is flip through the magazine, look at the photos and illustrations, and read the captions," says Conrad Warre, art director for the consumer magazine *Discover*. "We hope the art is so graphically demonstrative it'll make you read the text."

To create an initial strong visual impression in *Explore* here at the University of Kansas, designer Jan Morris Nitcher "learns the commercial tricks" by studying such "splashy" magazines as *In Health* and *Vanity Fair*.

From them, she's learned to create dramatic photos by using unusual lighting and to pull off visual surprises via typography, photos, and illustration. On her own, she's learned to "try many layout solutions for each article before settling on the final one."

Getting the reader to move into the articles takes imagination. Be creative in the way you depict both the research and the researcher.

1. *The science.* It's a beautiful world out there, especially when glimpsed from a fresh perspective. Blown up to 5-by-7 size, as in the September 1990 *Research/Penn State*, a quarter of an earthworm laid on fronded green vegetation becomes something more than itself.

But what of the invisible subjects? Scientific action so often occurs on a level that's cellular, molecular, or smaller—and it's hard to portray what you can't see.

Most award-winning campus editors and designers I talked to agree that illustration is a good visual messenger for the itty-bitty. You should budget for it—and it *is* expensive.

But it's cheaper in the Midwest than elsewhere. *Explore* has an art budget of $500 an issue. We bought an original liver-enzyme illustration for $300; it could have been twice or three times that. If you have no art budget, perhaps you have a school of fine arts or an art department that offers courses in illustration. Check with its students; you may have untapped local talent who would work for an illustration credit.

The up side of showing the invisible in science is that it "gives you a certain freedom" about portraying it, says Geoffrey Leavenworth, formerly editor of *Biomedical Inquiry* at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. Your illustration can be representational but beautiful—as was an image of luminous chlorophyll molecules beneath the billowy surface of a leaf in the Winter 1989 *ASU Research*.

Or it can be conceptual. Jeff Miller, *UCSF Magazine* managing editor, used an airbrush illustration to accompany a 1989 story about neurology. It showed a disembodied head, brain tissue exposed, receiving musical stimuli via the eyes, ears, and fingertips.

Editor Janet Worthington at *Hopkins Medical News* was especially proud of a mock woodcut full of "twirling, swirling strands of DNA." The familiar look of woodcut takes the mystery out of something as incomprehensible as DNA, she says, and just might make someone read a story about genetics.

Many editors emphasize the need for images that have aesthetic, not merely representative, value. "I did a story on radiology here," says Marshall Ledger, editor of *Penn Medicine*. "Because of the play of light and shadow, many of the images became artistic. A picture must have a visual quality in and of itself."

How about photos or drawings of objects as seen through an electron microscope? Some images are OK—especially those shot and enhanced by a world-class photographer, suggests Leavenworth. Most electron micrographs are brokered by photo agencies, which tend to give institutional discounts.

Despite the difficulty in showing invisible subjects, the result can be fabulous. Says Harlan Berger, contributing editor of *Research/Penn State*: "I'm always struck by the geometry of research, by the artiness of, say, a photomicrograph of crystalline structure."

2. *The scientist.* The need for drama extends to people. The editors agreed that you shouldn't be too literal when you portray the researcher.

"You can't just go into a lab with a schlumpy-looking scientist and have him standing there," says Karon Schindler, editor of *Emory Medicine*. "You have to make him look like a 'mad scientist,' have him doing something—looking at a gel, say, in dramatic light."

A recent issue of her magazine shows an orthopedic surgeon—lit from his left side, his right side in shadow—handling a spinal column as if it were a clarinet. Stunning.

2. *Polish the prose.* Here's where you really juice the monster. In his book *Lives of a Cell,* Lewis Thomas is a poetic essayist of the cell, the organism, the tribe, the polis, the planet. He proves that a writer can attract a reader to biology with a combination of metaphor, analogy, personification, gentle wit, and punchy verbs.

Leavenworth knows this. "Writers must be given the freedom to use all the tools in the tool chest: humor, dialogue, characterization, description, analogy, evocative language," he says.

Indeed, devices like these work as well in science writing as in fiction.

• *Personification.* I learned the importance of this technique during my lessons about concrete and steel. I came away with a feeling that steel was patrician, concrete blue-collar. The first two pages of the resulting story contrasted the two materials as if they were people possessed of different characters, strengths, weaknesses.

Worthington also personifies science when she speaks of the "little wars going on" at the cellular and molecular levels. She jokes about a writer "who was so poetic about bile it brought tears to your eyes": Its color

(Continued on next page)

At the University of Alabama at Birmingham's *Medical Center,* Editor Irene Dortch ran a photo of a doctor who himself had become a heart patient, his face crossed with rage. Often, though, the image is much softer. "We try to take a relaxed photo of the person in his or her environment, interacting with it in an emotional way," she says.

Miller at *UCSF Magazine* sums it up simply: "We show the scientist doing the science."

On the other hand, guard carefully against repetition. "You can have only so many people peering out from behind interestingly shaped objects or light playing off beakers," says Worthington. "After a while, all labs look alike."

I agree. Through the years, Nitcher has moved *Explore* away from being too literal. In the Winter 1991 issue I threaded a spirit-in-the-bottle metaphor through a story about clinical trials of drugs, hoping to provide the designer with a visual hook. But she wasn't shackled by my metaphor; instead, she used a theme-appropriate detail of *The Alchemist,* a painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, as cover art.

Abstraction can take other forms as well. Whether you're portraying the science or the scientist, keep these tools in mind.

• *Conceptual photos.* Unless you execute it well, conceptual photography is risky because the reader might not catch the meaning immediately. You want an image that, like the protrusion from Boris Karloff's neck, just won't let the reader turn away.

Two examples of successful conceptual photos: A recent issue of the University of Cincinnati Medical Center's *Discovery* contained an article on impotence—illustrated by a photo of men in a waiting room wearing paper bags over their heads. I hooted. Humor is too rare in our magazines, I think.

And to reflect a lead article on epilepsy, one *Discovery* cover superimposed a fireworks display on a silhouette of a head. "We're a bit show business," says Editor David Bracey. But the image worked.

• *Collage.* "My designers are strong on those," says Ledger at *Penn Medicine.* "What you get is sometimes almost 3-D." Collage is a form of shorthand that enables him to convey more than one idea in a single graphic. Designers can use any combination of painting, drawing, photography, or sculpture.

In a fall 1990 story on basic research on muscle, for example, the *Penn Medicine* designers started with a 19th-century illustration of the muscle system in a human figure. They overlaid the figure with photographs from the research, then overlaid one of the photographs with a section of a recording of a muscle action. "The aim," he says, "was to link the muscle that is so rarefied in its lab setting with that same vibrant organ I can feel twitching in my body."

• *Cartoon.* This is another way to inject humor into science. For an article about psychological research on the midlife crisis, for example, Nitcher and I commissioned a cover cartoon of a barfly toting up midlife disasters in his journal. An unhappy man—wrinkled suit, burning cigarette, empty martini glass—sums up his life like this: "Forty. Quit job. Bought Corvette. Met girlfriend. Dumped wife. Left girlfriend. Sold 'vette. What next?"

In CASE District VI competitions, one judge thought the cover "great," another "unattractive and unappealing." Love/hate responses are heartening: They show you've struck a nerve.

• *Clip art.* This can be an inexpensive yet creative way to liven up science. To illustrate an article in the Northeast Sea Grant Programs' *Nor'easter* about tracking down zebra mussels, designer Laurence Pearce enlarged a clip-art magnifying glass and framed the title within its lens: "Investigators Hunt for Great Lakes Enemy No. 1: Zebra Mussels." To continue the theme, the story's first sentence read, "It was a case of international intrigue of the foulest sort."

To give your readers the liveliest picture of science, vary your look. A mix of photo, illustration, pen-and-ink drawing, watercolor, cartoon, and collage helps transform science into a body electric. Also use both black-and-white and color—as much as you can afford—or try an enriched black and white. That's the route Schindler's taken with *Emory Medicine,* which runs duotone photographs—the "poor man's four-color," she says.

Think balance when considering your magazine's overall composition, too. *Discover*'s art director tries to have half art and half text in each issue. Warre and the writers have "usually reached that happy compromise by the end of the issue or the end of the year."—RM

ranging from "tobacco brown to grass green," its texture "viscous as ink," bile flowed "like the River Styx."

• *Metaphor and simile.* Lub-dub: These are the very heartbeat of the monster. Storad at Arizona State remembers his struggle to describe an atom, given the obsolescence of the old high school chemistry model of an atom as a solar system with orbiting electron planets. His eventual metaphor: a pellet embedded in a ball of foam—the electron cloud.

The best metaphors take even their writers by surprise. Last year I wrote a story about environmental threats, including the greenhouse effect, and referred to a recent dry summer in Kansas. A sentence that more or less wrote itself pleased me: "Some drought-baked Kansans believed they'd stepped under the black wing of apocalypse." (Shades of Count Dracula! That figure of speech seemed to me just right for a story about a world whose water resources are being sucked dry.)

The danger lies in a too-busy story premise, a confusion of metaphors and analogies. "I find that a good news story or magazine article uses no more than three major metaphors," Franklin has said. The trick is repeating and varying them.

Shorting the circuit

While on the topic of making science come alive, I wanted the award-winners' advice on another question: What makes science go dead?

Several editors mentioned stories that include too much. Writers should not "try to explain everything that's in their notes," says Karon Schindler, editor of *Emory Medicine*.

Likewise, says Dortch at UAB, "Instead of reporting everything with equal weight, single out a detail that shows the researcher's thinking."

Leavenworth dislikes survey pieces that offer, for example, an AIDS research update from five campus labs. "Those are deadly unless you can find a narrative thread and create a story."

But the real killer in science writing involves language. Too often you learn a little jargon, these editors agreed, and then you try to court your reader with its seductive opacity. The next thing you know, your research story is a long way from clear.

"I think of the term 'non-human primates,' " says Worthington at *Hopkins Medical News*. "If you mean 'monkeys,' spit it out."

Roger Martin is editor of Explore, *the 5,200-circulation research magazine at the University of Kansas, a public institution of 28,000 students in Lawrence.* Explore*—which goes to faculty and selected education and government officials, media, and alumni—was named a Top 10 magazine in CASE's 1990 Recognition program.*

Scientific Methods

Basic tips on writing periodical articles about research
by Mary Ruth Yoe

My second-grade teacher overreacted to Sputnik. After the Russians beat us into space, a call echoed down the educational ladder: Where are the scientists of tomorrow? When the word reached Prince Frederick Elementary School, Mrs. Elliott explained to us that science was a very difficult subject, but if we didn't learn it, the Russians would take over the world.

I heard this Cold War logic through a second-grader's mind: Science was scary. Science was too hard.

The years passed. After high school biology, I managed to avoid science completely until I found myself working on the magazine of a major research university, where even campus graffiti have scientific punch lines.

I had to learn about science—and about science writing. And, after five years of trial and error, I've picked up a few good ideas.

Research questions

The first hurdle—and sometimes the most daunting—is learning to work with scientists.

It's important not to walk into any interview cold. This is especially true with science articles: You have to do your homework. It's also important to let the scientist *know* that you plan to prepare. When you call to set up the interview, ask for appropriate background material.

If the scientist says, "Don't worry, it will be easier to explain it to you in person," don't take that too seriously. Find some related articles in the popular scientific press (try such periodicals as *Science News, New Scientist,* and *Science 86*). Look up the subject in a textbook or even an encyclopedia. At least you'll have an overview of the field and be familiar with terms. Remember, you aren't trying to become an expert—just somebody who can understand an expert.

From your background reading, prepare a list of questions. Stay away from such umbrella queries as, "Just what is it that you do?" Even delivered with your best cocktail party smile, that type of question will elicit a bored, superficial answer.

Sometimes the researcher will begin on the kindergarten level. If you get something along the lines of "There are these big, bad cells that eat up the alien invaders," you can up the intellectual ante by saying brightly, "Oh, are those the macrophages?" This gambit usually wins you a professorial smile of approval. There's a danger that the level of conversation may then rise too quickly, but you can always pull it back. And you will have convinced the scientist you can handle the material.

Once the interview is under way, keep it going with follow-up questions. These let you be sure you understand the material. A good trick is to rephrase what the scientist has just covered: "So what you're really saying is that . . ."

These questions also ensure that the scientist presents the material as clearly as possible. If an example or an analo-

gy occurs to you during the conversation, try it out. Ask for additional examples. And if a point goes over your head, admit it. Ask the scientist to try again.

Save any controversial questions for the late-middle of the interview. By then, you will have established rapport, and the scientist will be more willing to field difficult questions—especially if you ask politely. Keep in mind that this is not the time to emulate "Sixty Minutes."

Interpreting the data

The rules for writing the science article are, of course, the same as those for good writing of any sort.

Before you begin, decide what major points you'll be making. Sometimes, especially when a subject is new to you, you can lose track of the article's focus in the midst of all the procedural data. If you jump in with details of experiments (the 50-letter name of a trial drug, the number of rats in a control group) before suggesting the drift of the research (a drug that may help arthritis sufferers, a better artificial knee), you're likely to lose readers. They won't wade through the terminology to reach the point.

Once you have the destination of the article firmly in mind, aim the rest of your writing to give the reader as comfortable a ride as possible—without being condescending. Help the reader draw inferences from the material by signaling important discoveries and possible stumbling blocks. For example:

- Use clear transitions—words such as *now, so, but*—to follow the researcher's logic.
- Anticipate possible questions and ask them for the reader: Why dopamine? Was X really true?
- Work definitions in unobtrusively—in a parenthetical or appositive phrase. (Receptors are sites where neurotransmitters, the chemical messengers of the nervous system, act.)
- Use examples or analogies, perhaps the ones you tried out on the researcher during your interview. After all, if comparisons helped you understand the material, they'll probably help the reader. One writer described a super-coiled link of DNA this way: "Imagine it's had a perm at the hairdresser's and gone kinky."
- Don't become a mimic. Take care not to learn the subject so well that you use its jargon instead of English. I can hear you say, "Don't worry, I'll never be able to do that," but it's a sin that the novice or near-novice is likely to commit. You pick up the lingo—Germanic gaggles of nouns in search of an active verb—and you want to use it. Do so only sparingly.

Sometimes, especially in longer articles that cover many points, you can find yourself taking a detour. Before you know it, you're wandering down the primrose path of the researcher's particular whim—only to lose your theme and your reader.

The information may be an interesting sidelight to the topic, but if it doesn't work directly with the main point, or if it's a fascinating technicality that will go over the average reader's head, turn it into an honest sidebar. This both satisfies the researcher and lets the reader know from the start that the material is an aside.

Drawing conclusions

When you leave an interview, you may feel on top of the subject, sure of its ins and outs. But when you sit down to write, you may discover holes in your thinking. You can't explain what you don't understand. How can you salvage the situation?

First, try to avoid it all together. Take good notes and use a tape recorder, too. Try to transcribe your notes within an hour—certainly within 24 hours—after the interview.

But if the worst happens, there are ways to fill in the blanks. First, make a list of the information you need. Try to get the article as finished as you can by writing around the holes; the attempt at writing will show you what you're missing. Then call. The researcher will almost always respond even more helpfully than at the original interview—because he or she will

Breaking Free from Releases

You want to run an article on the microbiology department's latest breakthrough, and the public relations office helpfully sends over a lengthy release. Does this mean most of your work is done?

Although you may be tempted simply to reprint a press release—or to revise it only slightly—don't. The press release is meant to provide a framework for reporters, not the finished story. Like any other reporter, you must work from the press release to get the article that the readers of your periodical deserve.

What makes a press release different from a feature or news article? To begin with, it provides the official, institutional view of a subject. In fact, its real point is not so much that something newsworthy has happened but rather that something newsworthy has happened at Siwash.

This distinction creates a few points of difference:

- *Names and titles.* A release usually lists the full name and title (or titles) for every researcher involved. In an article, where the emphasis is on the science and not on the institution, you need only the most relevant names and titles. For example, you can let the reader assume that the head of the new emergency medicine program has an M.D. And you don't have to list each and every investigator; the phrase "a team of 11 others" may cover the minor contributors nicely. Another useful variation: "Wagner, Kuhar, and colleagues."
- *Quotations.* Avoid lifting researchers' comments directly from the press release. Sure, the quotes have been passed by everyone and the information is correct, but they're almost guaranteed to be lifeless. When researchers or administrators get the chance to edit their remarks, they almost always rewrite them, turning spoken English into polished writing. And press releases often end up with quotations by committee: accurate but dry.
- *Organization.* A good press release will lead with the breaking news. But if you're writing a long feature, you'll want to establish a context for that news first—perhaps by writing your lead from the background material that got shoved to the end of the press release. Since you don't need to present immediately the who, what, when, and where of the press release, you can focus more on the why. —MRY

be impressed by your diligence.

Of course, there's the rare scientist who really isn't a nice person. These people grant interviews reluctantly, demand to see the final product, and seemingly begrudge the short time they give you.

How do you call someone like this for help? You may not have to. Instead, call a junior member of the department with your questions. Explain that you don't want to bother Dr. So-and-so, who is going to get a final reading anyway. The junior staffer will understand (probably only too well) and will help you fill in the holes.

Verifying results

Often, the touchiest part of writing a science article is negotiating who gets the final say on the finished piece. Researchers who have been burned by superficial or overly optimistic media coverage often develop a general mistrust of the press and insist upon approving all articles.

Traditionally, the journalist's reaction has been to push back your fedora and growl, "It's my business to get the facts straight. My reputation's on the line, too, and you'll just have to trust me to do my job."

On the other hand, as science grows more and more complex, many writers appreciate a proofreading. The important thing to remember is that the scientist knows science and the writer knows writing. To prevent researchers from rewriting your work in the language they're used to—that of the scientific abstract—practice a few helpful techniques.

One ploy is to give the scientist limited time for reading. Make an appointment and deliver a copy—neatly typed to your publication's line count and looking as finished as possible—to his or her desk. Then come back within the hour to retrieve it.

Or, stand over the scientist as he or she reads. "To save you time," you can say craftily, "I've marked the parts that pertain directly to your work."

Another method is to read the article, or perhaps just the direct quotes, over the phone. The scientist will concentrate on making sure the facts and the general sense of the article are correct and refrain from making editorial embellishments.

Learning by experiment

Along the way, as you write more and more articles and develop working relationships with the researchers you cover, you will build up a reference library of your own: people you can trust to give you accurate, unbiased background.

One final bit of advice: The best way to get started is to start small—say, with a news item rather than a lengthy, complex feature—and build. With each effort, you'll learn more about science, and the writing will get easier.

And, eventually, you may even understand that graffiti.

Mary Ruth Yoe is editor of the University of Chicago Magazine. *When she wrote this article, she was the editor of the Alumni Magazine Consortium, based at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. While she was associate editor of* Johns Hopkins Magazine *from 1980 to 1983, Yoe wrote on research topics ranging from tropical medicine to Alzheimer's disease.*

Who's In Charge Here?

Getting the authority you need to edit an effective alumni periodical

by Marshall A. Ledger

Not long ago (I wish I could use the fantasy-formula "Once upon a time," but unfortunately this story is true), the president of a small college told the alumni magazine editor that he had abolished the football program but did not want her to report it. "Why stir anything up?" he asked rhetorically.

Shortly thereafter, I was discussing black-studies programs with an administrator at a large Midwestern university. He told me that if his campus's program was weak, he would not permit his alumni magazine to say so even if the editor had innocently stumbled across that fact while reporting a story. "We're having enough trouble as it is, finding black students," he said. True, black students might enroll and become bitterly disillusioned, but he was willing to risk that.

Some editors would chafe at attitudes like these; they'd fight and perhaps resign if the restrictions weren't lifted. Other editors would succumb reluctantly. Still others would accept the limitations while continuing to believe that they maintain editorial authority. "I have enjoyed a great measure of independence," says an editor of a secondary school magazine, who also notes that she likes the "protection" of having her articles approved by her school's head and development director.

According to an informal survey of 35 award-winning CASE editors, most are reasonably satisfied with the amount of authority they have. The survey didn't ask, however, if they are also satisfied with their magazines. For, to be blunt, many alumni magazines are dull—often because editors are afraid to rock the boat.

Why does editorial authority matter? Because an alumni periodical needs to be both interesting and credible. Puff pieces are neither. But only editors with the authority to say no to puff—and yes to stories that face the facts—can edit interesting, credible magazines, tabloids, and newsletters.

Of course, even if you have the authority to avoid puffery, your job is still going to be tough simply because readers know your periodical is sponsored by your school, college, or university. And that's why, says James Leach, editor of *Colgate Scene*, "anticipating [readers'] skepticism may be the most convincing argument for full and fair reporting and the establishment of editorial control."

After all, "if there's no trust from the readers," asks Dennis Dinan, former

editor of the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, "what's the point?"

Finding the boundaries

"Many editors don't test the limits," says George Keller, who, as editor of *Columbia* magazine, was a three-time winner of the Sibley Award for the best alumni magazine. "They assume they don't have the right to do so."

Keller, now senior vice president of Barton-Gillet consultants in Baltimore, tells war stories of editing *Columbia* in the late 1960s: incensing some fund raisers and one dean by criticizing two new campus buildings, angering the Greek set by describing fraternity behavior, and, chiefly, stirring mixed feelings in administrators by explaining at almost book length the radical uprisings. "They were proud of the awards I won but wished I hadn't opened issues as frankly as I had," he recalls. "I was also called a traitor to my own institution by a few editors."

Robert M. Rhodes, editor of the *Brown Alumni Monthly*, remembers that when he began to cover exciting doings at the University of Pennsylvania as editor of *The Pennsylvania Gazette* in the 1960s, "Nobody ever said no. I'm not sure I set out to achieve any authority—I just did what my journalistic sense told me I should do."

Obviously, Keller and Rhodes owe their success to a mixture of courage and luck. If you don't want to depend on either to get you through, start out like Andrew W.M. Beierle, editor of *Emory Magazine*. He asked for, and received, complete editorial responsibility as a condition of employment.

Beierle doesn't believe that there's necessarily a conflict between being an advancement professional and preserving journalistic integrity. The key, he says, is to apply your editorial skills and standards "in the best interest of the university."

Even with complete authority from the start, however, he feels that both editor and magazine must grow into their roles. In 1983 Beierle ran a lengthy story explaining how a medical scientist fabricated research data. He thinks he could not have run the story two years earlier, when the magazine's staff and direction were still being set.

For some editors, editorial authority can be measured by one test: Prior to publication, must the articles be read by the subjects, by superiors, or by other interested parties?

Rachel Morton, editor of *Contact* at the University of Massachusetts, would rather not have a story's subject, such as a professor, review an article she's written before it's published. She has found that academicians tend to change a juicy (and accurate) quotation for a general audience into something stiff or flat because the original sounded too "casual."

That's why, if her subjects insist upon seeing the text, she offers to read quotations over the phone from her computer terminal—which apparently sounds so cumbersome that they usually drop the demand. "They thank you in the end, when their friends say they liked the article," she observes.

Morton will, however, check the text with the subject in extraordinary circumstances. When an economics professor on whom she was doing a story was attacked by the conservative watchdog group Accuracy in Academia, Morton let the professor look at the way he had stated his ideas. Precision was especially important to her in this case, she says, because she didn't want to tarnish his reputation. The issue was not who controlled the story but whether the story correctly presented the professor's already-controversial views.

On the other hand, Aida K. Press, editor of *Radcliffe Quarterly*, feels that she surrenders nothing by showing her articles to the people concerned. She wants to let the president know when she might receive flak on a piece. And if subjects touch up the copy, she says, "it doesn't bother me if they sound better in an article."

Gaining authority

Editors need assume just one thing: They have only as much authority as their superiors give them. Although Elise Hancock of *Johns Hopkins Magazine* has total responsibility for the magazine's focus and content, "I can be fired and I know it—and that's all the needed control."

But the amount of authority you have is never fixed. You can do much on your own behalf to increase it. CASE professionals suggest several ways to gain and maintain control:

• *Accomplish your bosses' ends—with your means.* Presumably you're qualified to do your job. Your superiors, who hired you, should assume that too, and be subtly reminded of it.

One way to prevent administrators from forcing their ideas on you is to prove that you have equally good ideas of your own. To do that, you need to anticipate what others on campus want your periodical to accomplish for them—and help them get what they need without sacrificing your own standards.

"Keeping control involves meeting the needs of various parts of the institution without being asked so they never feel a lack of control," says Hancock of Johns Hopkins. "That way you get to meet the needs according to your best professional judgment, not according to a nonjournalist's idea of what would be a good story."

As part of this, stay in close touch with administrators and faculty throughout your institution. Figure out ways to assure them that they can talk to you, share their concerns with you, and trust you.

And above all, Hancock says, "Stay ahead. If you appear all bright-eyed and declare this story on student life will be just wonderful for pumping musical candidates for admission, people will know you have their interests in mind. So do keep those interests in mind—and say so."

• *Aim to produce a quality publication.* A big part of this, says Emory's Beierle, is simple professionalism. "I think the best way to gain editorial control and responsibility is to do your job well, be credible, and above all be accurate," he says.

Also appreciate whatever influence your periodical possesses. "When you do an excellent job, people notice the magazine, read it, and pay attention to it. You build respect for yourself and perhaps fear in others—the feeling that it might be good not to displace you or your periodical," says John Marcham, editor of *Cornell Alumni News*.

• *Talk.* If you're taking on an editor's job, discuss your editorial intentions at your interview. Later, reinforce them if you hear ominous rumblings about your work. Know how your superiors feel about your periodical. Never assume that it's enough to produce an excellent product in what Dinan calls "splendid isolation."

• *Listen.* It's often possible to translate your institution's needs into credible article ideas. One university administrator wanted the alumni magazine editor to do a story on why people give to the institution. The editor re-

The Controversy over Controversy

"You don't establish authority by being able to cover controversy," says Robert Rhodes, editor of the *Brown Alumni Monthly*. You won't prove your mettle simply by setting yourself up as the campus muckraker. Instead, you prove it by covering the campus fully.

Still, controversy is usually one part of that total picture. "Alumni know there's no unanimity on anything on campus except the need for vacations," Rhodes says.

Alumni—and editors—also know that controversy can make interesting reading. "We need to deal with controversies because we're competing against commercial media for the reader's time and interest," says George Beezer of the *Lehigh Alumni Bulletin*. "If we're not being read, why bother?"

You want to cover controversy and be respected for it, even by those you may make uncomfortable. Here are some ways to approach it:

• *Be fair.* "If you bend over backward to cover all sides, you take the edge off your editorial thrust," says Beezer. "But you have to do it to be professional."

• *Be thorough—but also use discretion.* If someone on campus knows or could have known a crucial fact, you should publish it. But omitting a student's name in a recruiting scandal or the cause of death in a suicide does not necessarily destroy an article.

• *Be calm.* Controversial topics don't always require controversial treatment, notes John Marcham, editor of *Cornell Alumni News*.

"The less bluntly one reports them, the less conflict," he says. "Much of the exaggerated charges and countercharges can be omitted to keep the temperature of one's reporting down. Some readers realize you are pulling your reportorial punches; most don't."

• *Focus exclusively on the substance of the controversy.* Much of the rhetoric, though a source of juicy campus gossip, isn't germane to the issue anyway.

• *Consider waiting for the story to mature.* With time, the people embroiled in a controversy are usually able to put it in perspective. This should help you to cover your story thoroughly and accurately. Besides, if your periodical comes out monthly or quarterly, you can't do blow-by-blow coverage anyway.

But don't put an important issue off forever. Because your periodical may well give your alumni their only chance to read a full explanation, you owe them a report. Ignoring a bad situation may help you escape the wrath of your boss, but it won't meet your obligation to your reader or your conscience.

• *Assign the story to the right writer.* When John Marcham wanted a story on campus unionization, he needed someone who could cut through the rhetoric on both sides. He eventually found a local writer with experience at a *Village Voice*-type journal.

• *Look for models.* When you're searching for the right approach to take, call your colleagues and ask them how they handled the same or similar issues.

For example, divestment of South African stock has been a hot topic on campuses everywhere, and an editor needing guidance has any number of examples of how to report it (or not to). We at *The Pennsylvania Gazette* have prided ourselves on straightforward coverage that any magazine could match in tone, if not necessarily in depth. In March 1986, we devoted our entire feature section—16 pages—to the topic. Our coverage included everything from complete reports of our trustees' decision-making process to a list of Penn's South African investments to the viewpoints of political cartoonists around the world.

• *If a subject is too sensitive to run big, run it less prominently.* Beezer of Lehigh recalls once playing on page one of the university tabloid an undergraduate survey on student sexual activity. The president at that time ordered the issue burned and reprinted without the offensive article. In retrospect, Beezer believes he could have saved the article and a lot of trouble by playing it less prominently from the start.

• *Accept the fact that you will make mistakes—but don't let them stem from cowardice.* Early in his career, while he was editor of the *Lehigh Alumni Bulletin* in the late 1950s, Rhodes pulled a story on his institution's research when the administration objected to the accurate but unflattering way the facilities were described.

"I earned the enmity of my assistant at the time—and rightly so," Rhodes says. "I was feeling my way, then." —ML

plied that a better article would focus on why people should give—that is, what is worth supporting. The exchange could have been confrontational; it remained conversational.

George L. Beezer, editor of the *Lehigh Alumni Bulletin*, says that every now and then someone asks him to publish news of limited interest, such as the proceedings of an alumni meeting. So he asks in return, "Where could we include information of that kind in the magazine?" That, Beezer says, "usually makes the requester face our realities."

Even so, Beezer knows why such requests arise: No vehicle exists to convey that kind of information. He sometimes accommodates requests by including such items in a column he writes for the magazine, but he finds he generally has to turn down most "self-serving" items. "You set up your best standards—and then you bend a little bit," Beezer says.

• *Know the character of your institution.* If you don't know from the start whether your institution is conservative or liberal, tradition-bound or progressive, you've got more problems than simple authority. Talk to administrators, faculty, alumni, and students to find out how the tone and content of your periodical can mesh with their interests and needs.

This understanding also helps you

prepare for the occasional not-so-good reaction. Dinan did, so he was braced for some negative mutterings from a few alumni after he ran a picture of a black professor on the cover of the Dartmouth magazine.

• *Know your readers.* Commercial magazines spend huge sums to learn what you already know: Your readers are well-educated and, presumably, aware of what's going on in the world. So treat them that way, not like the adolescent buffoons they may once have been. Don't tell them that your institution is good; let them surmise that it is because you tell them about the institution's stimulating people and ideas in a good periodical.

• *Know the nature of an alumni periodical.* Rule out issues extraneous to your institution or to the people associated with it. At the same time, include national or global issues that affect or interest those people. This approach will help you broaden your scope—and your magazine's depth and quality—without losing your major claim on readers: You offer them information about alma mater that they can get nowhere else.

One tack is to declare the "continuing education" of your readers as your goal, suggests Walton R. Collins, editor of *Notre Dame Magazine.* The phrase "has a stuffy sound, but I mean it in a broad sense—to cover serious and important topics that touch readers' lives in some way and broaden their intellectual horizons."

• *Edit without looking over your shoulder.* John Woodford, executive editor of *Michigan Today*, ran a story on University of Michigan faculty, staff, and students who have visited and worked in Nicaragua. Some readers considered it propaganda against the Reagan administration and a sign that teaching was going to hell. Woodford considered it part of the current "campus environment" and, as such, a valid story. Nevertheless, the story would never have been told if his primary concern had been how to avoid irritating somebody.

This concern may take on new dimensions when angry readers threaten to withdraw their financial support. If this happens, check their giving records before you get too upset: Often such readers' gifts run in the low *two*-figure range annually.

Marcham remembers that in 1969, after black students occupied a campus building at Cornell, administrators feared annual giving would drop. In fact, annual giving set a record the following year. "A frank reporting of a difficult situation does not automatically cause trouble," Marcham says. "The opposite was true at Cornell."

Even if your development office suffers actual injury, chances are the damage will be temporary. As Rhodes of Brown says, "In the long run, informed alumni will be good alumni—that is, supportive in all ways."

• *Choose your battles carefully.* Nobody wins all the time. That's why, for example, you'll be better off by conceding a regular department for development news if it means you can keep boring donor profiles out of your feature section.

"I have found that I can convince my boss and members of my board of directors to see things my way by saving my energy for the big battles," says Jennifer Jackson Sanner, editor of *Kansas Alumni*. "People are more apt to listen to you when you are even-tempered and willing to listen to their views. Then, when it really counts, you won't offend them by standing on your soapbox and preaching about journalistic ethics. They'll know you mean business."

The key is to know when it's worthwhile to climb on that soapbox and when it's not.

"Don't fight everything," warns Bill Noblitt, executive editor of *Washington University Magazine.* "Editorial integrity is a must, but editorial suicide is just stupid."

No easy answers

This can be an exciting, if perilous, era for you as an editor. Opportunity beckons. Education is "one of the great under-reported stories in the United States," says George Keller. That makes the alumni magazine—"a lemonade stand in the desert," as he puts it—doubly important.

Even so, there are no easy formulas for getting the authority to make that desert bloom. There are only accuracy, flexibility, and resilience. "After 12 years," says Noblitt of Washington University, "it doesn't get any easier. I sweat it out with each issue."

Marshall A. Ledger is acting director of public affairs and editor of Penn Medicine *and* PennPulse *at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center. When he wrote this article, he was associate editor of the* Pennsylvania Gazette.

Beyond Control

"The notion of editorial independence is a snare and a delusion, in the institutional press and elsewhere"
by Bernard R. Carman

Several years ago when I spoke to a CASE group on the subject of writing for alumni magazines, I took as my text a comment by Samuel Johnson, the 18th-century author. "Sunday should be different from another day," he told his biographer, James Boswell. "People may walk, but not throw stones at birds."

The question at that time was whether writing for college magazines should somehow be different from other kinds of writing. The text applies to the current topic as well, and so does a variation on the question:

Is editing an alumni magazine somehow different from other editing? Can we defend the proposition that the academic editor should enjoy something akin to academic freedom, a kind of independence few editors in the commercial world enjoy? No one doubts the editor's right to stroll across campus any day of the week, but what happens when the stones begin to fly?

We must begin to answer these questions, I suggest, by recognizing

the very real and legitimate role of the publisher, a role that carries with it functions established by law and by reality as well.

As academic journalists we don't often speak of our publisher, but I use the term here because it applies. No matter who exercises the titular function—a vice president for development, an alumni director, a director of college relations, even a lowly director of public information—in most cases the true publisher, in law and in fact, is the corporate entity, the school, college, or university.

I mention the role of the publisher in law, and that leads to an important point. The great constitutional principle of freedom of the press is not an issue here, for reasons defined by the press critic A.J. Liebling. He said: "Freedom of the press is for the man who owns one," which is to say that the First Amendment has no application to editors, on campus or off.

Unless they happen to be publishers as well, editors have no true freedom of the press. Publishers have the freedom for two reasons: It's their money, and they have every right to spend it on the kind of periodical they want. Perhaps more significant, their money, not the editor's, will be on the line if a libel suit or other legal action is brought against the periodical.

When the government hauled newspapers into court in the Pentagon Papers case (if I may cite ancient history), it named not A.M. Rosenthal and Benjamin Bradlee but the New York Times Company and the Washington Post Company. Precisely for that reason, because the newspapers anticipated that, the decision to publish was made not by these editors alone but by their publishers, Arthur Sulzberger and Katherine Graham.

Bear in mind that Rosenthal and Bradlee didn't *surrender* the right to make that decision. They never had it. Power resided where it always does, with the money. If you're concerned about the locus of power in any enterprise—commercial or educational—*cherchez le cash*.

But the Pentagon Papers were an extreme case. Surely it is not the publisher's daily function to decide what goes in the periodical?

In a narrow sense, no. In a broader sense, however, the answer to that can only be yes.

Although I know it will not be a popular view, I suggest that only the publisher can define the broad purposes and policies of any periodical, for only the publisher knows what he or she hopes to get out of it. In the case of a commercial periodical, the objective, presumably, is a profit. Making money is the first obligation of any commercial enterprise; if it fails to achieve that objective, in all but a few special cases it will soon cease to exist.

The imperatives for institutional periodicals are not so different. Regardless of what they may say, few schools, colleges, or universities publish alumni magazines out of disinterested regard for the exchange of ideas. They publish because they believe that a magazine yields a return on an investment.

I used to offend my colleagues in development by describing our partnership as what's known on the streets as a sandwich: I jostle the mark while you lift the wallet. My colleagues were offended because, though that came near the truth, it was stated too frankly.

In most commercial periodicals the editorial product draws people who have shared interests that make them attractive—which is to say, salable—to advertisers. You sell magazines to the ostensible customers in order to sell those readers to the advertisers, who will provide the margin of profit. You can do that nakedly by pandering to a large and definitely common denominator, in the manner of, say, *Penthouse*. Or you can do it well, making literary history as you go, as *The New Yorker* does. But don't let the packaging mislead you: At the bottom line, both periodicals are in the same business.

You'll have fewer hang-ups about editorial independence if you recognize that you, too, are engaged in something like a commercial operation. Your job as a campus editor is to attract the interest of people from whom your institution hopes to make a profit by converting that interest into active support of one kind or another, most often financial. If you can't accept that, perhaps you should consider another line of work.

All this is a long preamble to a relatively short comment about my central topic, which is: The notion of editorial independence in any pure sense is a snare and a delusion, mere swamp fire, a will-o'-the-wisp. There ain't no such animal in the institutional press or elsewhere.

What does exist on all well-run periodicals, commercial and nonprofit alike, is a reasoned allocation of responsibility to those best equipped to carry it out. As an editor, you depend on the publisher for a periodical to edit and for an environment in which to edit effectively. But a publisher intelligent enough to provide these, and to give you a workable statement of objectives for the periodical, must then recognize that he or she depends on you for editorial expertise. After all, it is your proper function in this joint enterprise to use the appropriate editorial devices to, in a sense, collect a crowd of eager supporters.

The key word here is not independence, but interdependence. If your joint effort is to succeed, you must each be prepared to recognize the legitimate part played by the other. Only thus can you hope to gain the mutual professional respect that will serve you better than a chimerical "independence."

Mention should be made here of another special hazard in institutional editing. The great 17th-century cynic George Saville remarked that "the vanity of teaching often tempteth a man to forget he is a blockhead," and I have never known a teacher whose vanity was severely damaged by election to a college presidency. Presidents, like commercial publishers, can be as wrong-headed about periodicals as about other matters, but error remains a perquisite of the office. Editors, alas, can only try to be right and hope for the best.

Let me close, then, with a couple of simple reminders:

1. If a Rupert Murdoch can fire the editor of the *Times* of London—as he did—I doubt that you can mount a persuasive claim to invulnerability as editor of the *Tidewater Tech Tatler*.

2. That being the case, bear in mind that the applicable constitutional amendment here is not the First, which guarantees freedom of the press, but the 13th. That's the one about involuntary servitude.

Bernard R. Carman is director of public information at Lafayette College, a private institution of 2,050 students in Easton, Pennsylvania. He has edited magazines in both institutional and commercial settings for more than 25 years.

To Print or Not to Print

Six editors tell about their toughest editorial decisions—and the consequences

To Thine Own Self Be True

"Sister Julie, have you been lying to us?"

That's what a distraught student asked the president of Albertus Magnus College upon learning that her all-women's college was about to admit men. As then-editor of the college's brand-new quarterly magazine, I had to do more than communicate the news about the switch to coeducation: I had to explain and justify this sudden and seemingly contradictory turn.

When I came to Albertus Magnus in August 1984, the college was still a small liberal arts college for women only. To launch the new magazine, I decided an appropriate cover story would be an article in which President Julia McNamara loudly and proudly proclaimed the virtues of a women's college. Thus, Volume I, Number 1 displayed our smiling president on the cover, inviting the reader to open the magazine to her article on "Education for Leadership: The Role of the Women's College in Modern America."

Only a few weeks after that appeared, President McNamara found herself grappling with the question of whether Albertus could continue to exist as a women's college. She and her top advisers soon concluded that while it could survive, it had become too small to thrive. In March 1985, the board of trustees unanimously voted, on her recommendation, to admit men as of that September—the 60th anniversary of the college's founding.

The admission of men to Albertus was hardly an issue we on the magazine could ignore; the difficulty was finding an editorial approach, given the stance we had taken just a few months before. I decided the only credible approach was to address the issue directly. In the article about coeducation that appeared in our third issue, I mentioned our inaugural issue about women's colleges. I quoted the student who had questioned the president's veracity. I cited all the depressing statistics that had contributed to the decision. I pointed out that no one had asked the opinion of alumnae. It was a frank discussion.

And the consequences? Well, in the year of Albertus' Diamond Jubilee, alumnae giving declined. On the other hand, overall giving increased. Equally important, interest in the college by prospective students—male as well as female—grew, resulting in a 27 percent increase in freshman enrollment the fall of 1986.

Now, while I can't trace a direct route from this particular article to the events that followed, I can claim that it helped set the tone for the discussions among alumnae, friends, parents, and prospective students.

And oh, yeah—I was able to sleep well, too.

Jack McCain
(Formerly Director of Public Relations and Publications
Albertus Magnus College)
Editor
University of Connecticut Health Center

The Unkindest Cut of All

The article that gave me the most trouble was actually not controversial in itself—at least, not in content.

One of our teachers had shown me a piece she had written not for publication but as a labor of love. The account, which described her experience singing on national television with a prominent musical ensemble, was emotional, witty, and vivid. Since she is an alumna of the school as well as a teacher, I decided to publish the article in our magazine.

However, the director of development, who had approval rights on all copy, loathed not only the teacher but also the style of music the article described. She agreed to the article's publication very reluctantly.

The alumni director and I, working through a vacation to meet a deadline, agreed that this article was the best in the issue and deserved cover treatment. However, the director of development, who returned from *her* vacation just in time to see the blueline, objected violently to the placement. After she threw a screaming tantrum, we ended up redesigning the entire magazine to suit her. The article ended up on page 2, and a feature more to the development director's taste ran on the cover.

The development director quit several years ago. I'm still here.

Editor at an independent school
Name withheld upon request

Method in the Madness

While *Sallyport*'s general editorial policy encourages frank coverage of campus issues, occasional topics arise that put us to the test.

Early in 1986 I decided to do an in-depth article on the university's library, about which faculty and student opinions ranged from "terrific" to "disgraceful." Only when a fairly heated discussion ensued during a pre-publication editorial board meeting did I get any inkling of just how impassioned those feelings were. Since *Sallyport*'s policy supports such discussion as long as all sides are represented fairly, there was no question that the article would run. The trick was to strike a careful balance between the different sides.

Things were complicated further when a Rice faculty member submitted a three-page "opinion" piece vitriolically condemning the library at every level. Our policy is to run all signed letters and opinion pieces, but this particular piece, if run alongside the staff-written library article, would definitely skew any attempt at balance. At the same time, I felt it would damage our credibility if we censored it.

My first attempted solution was to scour the campus for another faculty member, preferably with the same

amount of seniority and in a similar discipline, to write a counter-opinion piece. Because of short deadlines and the professors' hesitancy to enter a public debate with one of their own, I was unable to find the right "counterpoint" author.

Facing a deadline, I wrote the library story for our April 1986 issue. With the professor's permission, I included enough quotes from the opinion piece to represent his views, but I postponed decisions on what to do with the piece itself until our editorial board had a chance to talk about it.

After some discussion, my editorial board chair and I finally recommended to the full board that we run the opinion piece, unchanged, somewhere in the magazine. The group agreed. I got the professor's permission to print the piece as a letter to the editor in the next issue—along with a response from the university librarian.

In the end, everyone was satisfied: The major article had maintained its objectivity, everyone had been given a voice, and *Sallyport* had kept its integrity as an open forum for opinion.

Suzanne Johnson
Director of Editorial Services and Editor, Sallyport
Rice University

No Ado About Something

My hardest editorial decision had to do with an issue on "The Arts at St. George's." I wanted to show how underemphasized the arts are and to challenge the pedagogical basis for the lack of emphasis—or rather, the out-and-out ignorance—without pointing fingers at any one person or group that decides these things.

At that time, the school's leadership was in transition and I made my editorial decisions in a vacuum. I decided to ask faculty and students involved in the arts to write frank articles about their interests and wishes for art at St. George's.

The resulting issue, devoted solely to the topic, covered just about every aspect of the arts at the school, from photos of student projects to quotes from faculty on how our arts curriculum could be improved. I even included quotes from the National Association of Independent Schools that stressed the need to treat the arts as academic subjects.

As is the case with many school publications, people who were interested in the subject read the articles—and agreed. Those to whom the rumblings were directed (albeit indirectly) probably didn't read them, because I never heard anything one way or the other.

Eleanor Howard
Former Editor, St. George's
St. George's School in Rhode Island

All's Well That Ends Well

An elderly Lehigh alumnus, Roswell Gilbert, was convicted of murdering his ailing wife in Fort Lauderdale. Would our readers be upset reading about a murderer among our alumni?

We decided to proceed with a magazine article, its focus being the controversial matter of what constitutes murder, what mercy killing. The article ran and there were no problems—in fact, we received letters sympathetic to Gilbert.

A couple of people later commented that we were "daring" to do such an article. I don't agree. There's no subject a university magazine can't cover if some thought is given to doing the article with taste and judgment.

A magazine that never elicits a negative comment from a reader just isn't worth reading!

George L. Beezer
(Formerly Editor, Lehigh Alumni Bulletin
Lehigh University)
Director of Communications
Talbert Fuel Systems, Inc.

Toil and Trouble

The internal struggle I went through while doing a special issue on "Blacks at Bama" for *Alabama Magazine* in 1978 was the hardest thing I've experienced in my editorial career.

I had only students on my magazine staff. We talked about how we would approach this issue—either go light-handed or pull out all the stops and take an honest and balanced approach. We decided to interview students, faculty, and staff and not to soft-pedal any of their comments.

I assigned a black writer, one of the best young editors and writers I've known, to take sections written by the five other students and write a comprehensive and honest piece. She was not censored in any way, because I did not have to show a contents list to my boss. He trusted me.

I sweated bullets on this one. In my imagination, I knew I was going to lose my job. When that issue came out, Joe Davis, then director of alumni affairs, came out of his office with the magazine, patted me on the back, and said this was the best issue the university had ever published. I breathed a sigh of relief.

I can't tell you what it means to have a boss with guts. Joe had courage, and he backed me on that magazine even though I heard rumblings across campus that our office shouldn't deal with such issues. Let me point out, however, that it took me three years at Alabama to put out this magazine—three years of building trust. I don't believe a new editor can go into a university and demand this kind of trust. It takes time.

Bill Noblitt
(Formerly Editor, Alabama Magazine
University of Alabama)
Editor, Lawrence Today Magazine
Lawrence University
Editor, Designer Magazine
University and College Designers Association

Détente with Development

Editors can give fund raisers the support they seek by listening, defending, and innovating
by Robert J. Bliwise

Every institution dreams of having a major donor whose generosity knows no bounds. For Lafayette College the dream donor is former U.S. Treasury Secretary William E. Simon, whose gifts have ranged from a library wing to an endowed scholarship fund. How should the editor of the *Lafayette Alumni Quarterly* react, then, to a letter submitted for publication that asks, "Does anyone feel uneasy with the way fellow alumnus Bill Simon has used his money to become a living legend at Lafayette College?"

Then-editor Doreen Buchman didn't balk at publishing the letter. In her view, the letter had a proper place in the college magazine. Her senior colleagues agreed with her decision. And publishing the letter hasn't, from all appearances, damaged fund-raising efforts with Simon or any other prospect. In fact, it has produced rousing defenses of the donor in later letter columns—including one from a 96-year-old alumnus who insisted that the original correspondent should "take steps to correct your unkind and ungrateful criticism of Bill Simon."

Not every college, university, or independent school editor could make such a decision so comfortably. As an alumni periodical editor, you probably work in an environment that values fund raising; your superiors may even define your primary role as nurturing it. Fund raisers may think they know bad news when they see it. And they may not want to see it in a magazine or tabloid published by, and devoted to, their institution.

As an editor, how do you do handle the fund-raising office's demands?

Walt Collins, editor of *Notre Dame Magazine*, recalls an unsettling episode during his service with another magazine's advisory board. At a board meeting, school officials raised the question of how the magazine should handle an embarrassing news story. An official linked to the institution was under FBI investigation for misuse of funds. Collins' was "the only vote for our telling the whole story," as he remembers, "if for no other reason than it was better to come out with some kind of balanced version than to let the story pass from mouth to mouth and get wilder and wilder."

What finally emerged in print was "a two-paragraph boxed item buried as inconspicuously as one could imagine," in Collins' words. "I read the piece and said to myself that if I didn't know what it was all about, I wouldn't be able to tell from the story. It was one of the great examples of circumlocution."

Collins thinks that upholding credibility is more important than disguising the occasional warts—more important, he says, not just for editors doing a job but for fund raisers doing theirs. As the credibility argument goes, most alumni are sophisticated enough to realize that if the institution puts forward a wart-free face, it's not an honest face. Alumni will understand and even appreciate reminders of the fact that, well, colleges and universities are human, too, with all the possibilities and frailties that implies. Readers are going to be loyal enough to continue supporting the place that presumably helped launch them in life. But Collins admits he enjoys the luxury of working for a university that takes its central mission—promoting the free exchange of ideas—seriously.

I asked seasoned editors to share their experiences in working successfully with development officers. They offered the following suggestions.

First, the bad news

How do you sell the value of reporting bad news to fund raisers who consider it unnecessary and distasteful at best and damaging and counterproductive at worst?

- *Go for the balancing act.* Most of the apparently bad news that hits our campuses has a positive side. In successive issues this winter, the *Wisconsin Alumni* proved this by plunging into two of the hottest issues facing academia: minority recruitment and athletic excesses.

The first article ("What's Happened to the Possible Dream?") was sparked by concern over the racial climate at Wisconsin, the other ("Academics vs. Athletics") by the drafting of a Wisconsin hockey star into the professional leagues before he had a chance to earn his degree. In the first article, Editor Susan Pigorsch looked beyond isolated incidents to focus on what being a minority student was really like. The story focused on precollege, tutoring, and financial aid programs geared to minority students as well as a family of black alumni who hold an annual "Wisconsin Welcome" party for Chicago-area minority freshmen.

In the second article, she profiled both members of the UW athletic program who were concerned about academic standards and All-American athletes who were successfully managing their academic commitments. In neither of these articles did Pigorsch bury the bad news. Instead she placed it in a wider context and highlighted the positive ways her university was facing negative issues.

Because the Wisconsin Alumni Association is independently funded, fund raisers do not review the magazine before publication. Their reaction to the minority story was positive, particularly because the piece encouraged alumni participation in minority relations. Recruiters appreciated the magazine's honest portrayal of minorities taking part in everyday social and classroom activities.

At Duke, we worked to bring balance to a nasty news item about a young alumnus facing federal charges in an alleged securities scam. When the charges surfaced, the university acted quickly to cancel pledges and return gifts—including valuable paintings—made in his name. Our news item about the alumnus included an explanation of the university's return-to-sender decision. Our fund raisers, who had considered the episode an unmitigated embarrassment for the university, believed the magazine's treatment helped counteract the negative effect of nationwide coverage.

As editor of Southern Methodist University's magazine, Patricia Ann LaSalle faced a big challenge: how to report a well-publicized sports and governance scandal. LaSalle's solution: opinion pieces on the role of athletics by a professor, an honors student, a booster, and a football player as well as a chronology of the scandal, including the steps the university was taking to investigate it and to avoid similar problems in the future. Throughout, she stressed that even in the midst of the controversy, progress was continuing in SMU's academic programs.

"We tried to communicate to alumni not only that the issues were being addressed but that this kind of discourse and even dissent is natural to the academic environment," LaSalle says. "Our underlying theme was that this is what a university does best—tackle hard issues and come up with answers."

• *Communicate and consult.* Listen to and talk with development officers to understand their priorities. And be prepared to explain yours clearly.

Notre Dame's Collins attends weekly meetings with his fellow university relations officers, including his counterpart in development. He also joins in a twice-yearly staff retreat for department heads. And he arranges occasional informal conversations at lunch between his staff and the development staff. "That has been as useful as any device in avoiding confrontational situations," says Collins. "They learn what we do and why we do it, and we listen to their concerns."

Some editors, such as *Syracuse University Magazine*'s Dana Cooke, rely on the chief development officer to suggest stories—in this case, for the regular one-page department on campaign activities. For the remainder of each issue, which is devoted to alumni success stories, the magazine's whole constituency gets involved: "Magazine decisions are a team effort," he says.

Because Middlebury College is in the midst of a $60-million campaign, a campaign tabloid handles almost all fund-raising news. But *Middlebury Magazine* has a separate department for alumni and development office activities. "We cover the campaign in the magazine as a news story," says Editor Ed Ernst. "The development staff are news sources to be interviewed."

Ernst sits down with alumni staff to discuss possible stories for each quarterly issue. "We research and write [fund-raising] stories the same way we do any story," he says. "We serve the alumni office best by doing what we do best." As editor, Ernst says, he makes the final decisions about what works for the magazine.

Others approach the team spirit more informally. Don Pattison, editor of *Pomona Today* magazine, invites story suggestions from senior officials, including the development vice president, but makes final decisions himself. Pattison says he has "free rein" as an editor. He's run pieces on Pomona's first wheelchair-bound student (which revealed Pomona to be less than ideally suited for the handicapped) and on the college's new lesbian and gay alumni organization.

At the University of Kansas, a major campaign has brought alumni magazine editor Jennifer Jackson Sanner together with fund raisers on a regular basis. All serve on the campaign public relations committee. Through this formal mechanism for consultation, she can head off the urge to make the magazine a promotion piece for the campaign rather than a forum for reporting the news about it. "But we can't ignore the fact that the campaign is one of the biggest stories at the university," Sanner says. "I'd be a poor journalist if I ignored a story like that."

In your meetings and conversations with fund raisers, press home the fact that superficially bad news can bring surprisingly good results, advises Doreen Buchman.

For example, during her tenure Lafayette's development staff was wary of the college magazine's plans to produce a theme issue looking back on the Vietnam War. The special issue included references to the days of student activism—something that continues to stir alumni passions. The magazine also carried an excerpt from a novel, written by a Lafayette alumnus, about an American fighting unit in Vietnam. The excerpt had its share of graphic language.

"A lot of people didn't want to deal at all with Vietnam—and it is an uncomfortable controversy to face," Buchman recalls. "There was strong concern that this would create negative reactions among alumni, particularly among older alumni."

Buchman won the day with her argument that the theme would engage her readers' interest. In the end, the issue not only drew positive reactions, especially from younger alumni, but it also resulted in a fund to memorialize Lafayette alumni killed in the war.

• *Make allies of those who support objective news coverage.* Especially if it comes from top administrators, such support can help turn aside objections from fund raisers who are overly sensitive about the effect of bad news on the bottom line.

LaSalle knows of no other institution that, in just six months' time, had an athletic scandal, a reform of the governance system, and a new president. But even during SMU's most trying days, the attitude on campus—notably on the part of the interim president and the vice president for development—was that "we had to report the bad news along with the good," she says. "So it was very much in our interest not to cover up." The school even published three supplemental newsletters for alumni about the controversies and reforms.

John Soisson, editor of the University of Portland's magazine, secured early agreement from the director of public relations, vice president for university relations, and president that honesty in print is the best policy. Because the vice president for university relations oversees the development office, fund raisers were brought into the policy and did not object.

Sometimes Soisson also refers to models of openness, such as *Notre Dame Magazine*, to point out the wisdom of not covering up. He also makes the case for respecting readers' right to know the truth.

"Our readers went to school here," he says. "We can't fool them, and why should we try to? Our alumni would see right through it, it would destroy the credibility of the university, and in the long run it would create ill will among donors and potential donors.

"Occasionally there's a nasty letter to the editor. But our response is that if we have something that expresses a valid opinion, it belongs in there—that's what a university is all about."

Now for the good news

It's not just bad news that carries a challenge for the editor. Good news—in the form of fund-raising success—can cause tension when fund raisers want publicity.

Editors like to insist that an institution worth supporting must project itself believably. Does that mean you

have to dampen self-congratulation? Many editors say yes.

How, then, to accentuate the positive news of fund-raising success without overemphasizing to the point of indigestibility?

• *Treat fund-raising news as news—nothing more, nothing less.* It's easy to let loyalty override objective judgment about what to report or how to present it. But editors must balance pride in the institution with a healthy aversion to puffery.

LaSalle of SMU adopts a balanced approach. Her "On the Hilltop" news pages accommodate the news of gifts and grants and building dedications. But when the stock market crashed, she decided that in this case the development angle justified adding a one-page article that probed the crash's impact on fund raising.

Duke Magazine, too, picked up on some timely financial news to run a fund-raising article. Right after last year's massive change in the federal tax code, we published an interview with the university's government relations director. The interview explored why colleges and universities lost out in their lobbying efforts against the tax revision. But it also touched on how the revision could affect charitable giving—a theme that, we believed, met the test of newsworthiness.

• *Segment the news from your regular copy.* Some editors just acknowledge fund-raising news for what it is and use the following techniques to make it stand apart.

1. Separate publications. Soisson of the University of Portland participated in the decision to pull a big fund-raising item—the university's annual report, which includes the honor roll of givers—out of the alumni magazine. People at Portland, including the primary fund-raising staff, agreed that an unabashedly hard-sell message was incompatible with the editorial mission of the magazine. "For those who developed an attachment to the university through the magazine, the report—with its not-so-subtle requests for money—was something that didn't belong," says Soisson.

Many editors make decisions on what to report about fund raising on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of the news. "Success in fund raising will get feature space; the million-dollar gift will see a great deal of play," says Kim Nilsen, editor of *The News* at Northfield Mount Hermon School. "But the majority of fund-raising news is channeled to other outlets, and it should be. My goal as editor is to make certain that the magazine is read, and unless people are acquaintances of the donor, those stories tend not to get a great deal of readership."

Instead, Nilsen suggests, most fund-raising news is better handled in campaign and parents' newsletters and case statements.

2. Supplements and special sections. Pomona's Pattison ran magazine supplements devoted to the college's capital campaign. Even there, he stresses, the focus was on where the money was directed. He ran a story, for example, on student leaders helped by financial aid. The capital campaign pages featured no direct pitch for donations.

Notre Dame Magazine has traditionally supported campaigns with a special section in its campus news department that retains the rest of the magazine's easy-to-read style. Despite the fund-raising focus, the section still covers news and issues. For example, to accent the campaign's goal of recruiting top-notch faculty, the magazine published a piece called "Star Wars" that discussed, in Collins' words, "the difficulties of attracting star-quality faculty to a sleepy little Midwestern town with a lot of snow in the wintertime."

3. Ads. Some periodicals, including Notre Dame's, segment overt fund-raising pitches in advertisements. *Notre Dame Magazine* runs no paid advertising, but it donates an ad to promote fund raising on the inside back covers of two of its four issues.

Both Duke and SMU frequently publish paid ads for annual giving, planned giving, and other development programs. In a variation on the development ad, *Middlebury Magazine* features a column by alumna Jane Bryant Quinn, *Newsweek* magazine's financial advice columnist. Quinn's column "suggests ways alumni can take advantage of different giving strategies and have those strategies work for their own benefit," says Editor Ed Ernst. Although the development office doesn't pay for the space the column takes up, Ernst sets it apart visually to make it look different from the other editorial matter.

Ernst's magazine also devotes its back cover to the college's $60-million, five-year campaign. Subtlety is the key there as well, he says. The back-cover ads sometimes feature prominent Middlebury alumni and popular professors who explain the college's lasting impact on their lives.

• *Remind your fund raisers that projecting excellence is not the same as bragging.* An excess of self-congratulatory zeal can be unseemly. But you can project excellence in more exciting—and effective—ways than those infamous grip-and-grin shots of the donor of the moment.

Most fund raisers believe that people give to winning causes and not necessarily to causes that go begging for their bucks. Pattison of Pomona College says that as periodical editors, "our responsibility is to tell donors what they're spending their money on. We build friends with the magazine. People can ask for money in other ways."

As Nilsen of Northfield Mount Hermon puts it, "I don't want the magazine to panhandle for money. It's meant to be a subtle form of development promotion. The fact that the magazine is well-designed, that it carries editorial material that I hope is excellent, that it is attractive to look at tends to elevate alumni feelings about the institution.

"The magazine subtly indicates to them that the institution is sound and healthy and progressive and that it is well worth the effort of the individual to support the institution."

Robert J. Bliwise is editor of Duke Magazine, *which received the 1986 and 1989 Sibley Award for Magazine of the Year in the CASE Recognition program and has been ranked in the Top 10 university magazines for each of its seven years of publishing. Duke University is a private institution of 9,700 students in Durham, North Carolina.*

The Editor as Insider-Outsider

Six enlightening definitions of an honorable, if misunderstood, calling
by Marsha Scott Gori

I'd been burned.

The search piece copy I'd completed had drawn praise from my university relations colleagues, but it was badly scorched in the faculty/academic administrator review. "My secretary and I think this is sophomoric," wrote the head of the curriculum committee.

"Well, at least you know you're writing for the right audience," my boss offered, trying to soothe my hurt feelings.

I didn't feel better. "An artist doesn't belong in the organization," I said, pouting.

I was younger then. I've learned.

Now, when we send admissions copy for review, we attach a cover memo. We describe how the copy developed from Bucknell's market research. We say we're playing up what students see as our strengths—close relationships with faculty—and playing down perceived weaknesses—that we are too rural. We explain how the publication fits the total enrollment program. And we emphasize that faculty have other opportunities to present their curricula in academic brochures.

Does the cover memo stop the insults?

Well, not always. But we know that, after we've written for the audience of 17- and 18-year-olds who are considering Bucknell, we have to rework the package for another audience—the internal one.

Have I sold out?

Absolutely not. But I have stopped thinking of myself as the artist in the organization. Nowadays, I see my role as the strategic player who stands between the university and its constituencies.

I'm the insider-outsider.

This term hasn't yet entered the institutional lexicon, but it should. Enough advancement professionals, particularly writers and editors, see themselves in this role. So let's add insider-outsider to our dictionary and conceive a working definition.

Insider-outsider (1) *The interpreter who offers an understanding of life outside the institution to those inside the institution.*

"It's something I find puzzling," says Joyce Muller, director of publications at Western Maryland College. "We all own houses, shop, and have kids, but sometimes we forget how that real-life experience relates to the university."

Muller says making campus insiders aware of the outside world is part of her job. "We all need to do a better job of education internally," she explains. "I try to meet one-on-one with faculty members and administrators as much as possible."

When she talks to insiders about recruitment, for example, Muller tells them about her own teen-age daughter. "She tells me she doesn't want to go to a college that has tacky school colors," Muller says. "What goes into high school students' decisions is something insiders need to hear."

Insider-outsider (2) *The interlocutor who engages in dialogue about the institution.*

"I have to know what's going on inside the institution because I'm the person who tells the institution's story on the outside," says John Soisson, editor of university publications at the University of Portland. "I don't feel as if I'm caught in the middle. It's honorable work to move comfortably in more than one world."

When people on campus question his judgment, Soisson pulls out the Gunning Fog Index. "I show faculty members that they're writing for someone who's completed 26 years of education. I show them magazines like the *Atlantic*, which uses a 12th-grade writing level. And I explain how anecdotes are more effective than jargon."

These tactics are often effective, Soisson says, though one professor did tell him, "I don't write anecdotes."

Insider-outsider (3) *An important role that only someone who is comfortable having authority can perform.*

"We're tacticians, experts," says Ben Birnbaum, associate director of communications at Boston College. "We want to be in on the creation."

Birnbaum's "we" encompasses more than campus editors; it includes anyone in communications.

"It comes down to authority," he says. "If you have authority and use it to tell the institution's story, you'll communicate the professional way. And you'll be telling a far more effective story than the born-in-the-bone loyalist might tell."

Mary Frances Donley agrees. As associate director of public relations at Gettysburg College, it was her job to create a new internal periodical. She approached the project as an insider-outsider.

"I thought about how people had communicated traditionally," she explains, "and I realized the principal communication was talking. So our office created a periodical around what people talked about."

The result is *Gateway*, a newsletter with departments that center on topics of conversation. One example concerned campus construction, a subject that Donley says "always gets everybody's attention and the administration always wants to address."

The insider might have called the column "Gettysburg's Wonderful New Buildings." The outsider might have called it "Disruptions." Donley's insider-outsider approach: "Detours."

The solution fulfills the institution's need to document its growth and also acknowledges the internal audience's view of construction as an inconvenience. "Detour" implies "temporary" and satisfies everybody.

Insider-outsider (4) *A strong, confident person.*

"I feel I say no an awful lot," says Mary Ruth Yoe, editor of the *University of Chicago Magazine*. "Everyone's defini-

tion of the university—and what we should report about it—is different. I'm the one who has to avoid parochialism or boosterism, a charge readers often level against alumni magazines. If I'm telling the story journalistically, I'm doing the job."

If the university wants a story on how philanthropy supports faculty scholarship, for example, it's the insider-outsider's job to find an angle on that subject that will engage a reader and get a message across. "I might take that idea and make it part of a bigger story on the high cost of faculty," Yoe says. "It could include what it costs to move a lab—or the bidding wars that surround some 'star' professors."

Yoe's solution is the one that any good journalist would devise. But if you think claiming you're a journalist will help you on the inside, think again. "Insiders see journalists as those who've misquoted them," says Boston College's Birnbaum. "The journalist is the outsider whom administrators have a hard time accepting as the insider."

But acceptance on the inside can come in time, says Yoe, who's been in the top job at Chicago's magazine for just two years. "As new kids on the quads, we're moving step-by-step, not too fast, working at gaining respect from readers on campus and beyond."

Even so, acceptance by the administration isn't the chief concern of the insider-outsider. "Everything shouldn't be easy," says Yoe.

"It's a big job," says Birnbaum. "Stay alert."

Insider-outsider (5) *Someone who will pay attention to almost everything but believe next to nothing.*

"I have to be enough of an insider to know what's going on at the university and enough of an outsider not to buy it," Yoe explains.

"As communicators, we're the first skeptics," says Donley at Gettysburg. "What the institution wants to say should pass my critical test or it won't pass anyone else's."

Donley offers the example of preparing the annual report. The expedient way, she says, would be to publish a one-way institutional message that doesn't take into account the audience's needs or perceptions. "But the insider-outsider way is to orient those words to the way a reader reads."

This is good advice whether you're developing a magazine article or a radio spot. Editors say these are the important elements of communication.

• *Ideas.* "They're one stepping stone between an institution and its publics," Donley says. "Not everyone may be interested in your campus, but many people might be engaged by the arts or multiculturalism."

• *Details.* These are another of the insider-outsider's basics of communication, Chicago's Yoe says. "In the magazine, specifics form the whole. In admissions or development material, specifics illuminate the whole. It's not possible to tell the entire story; specifics do it for you."

• *Thought.* Promote clarity and intelligence, says Portland's Soisson, not emotionalism and sacredness. "People on campus sometimes think the only story is to say how wonderful the institution is. But to the editor, that story has long ceased to be precious; it's fragile and brittle and ineffective."

• *Passion.* Muller at Western Maryland often advises others on the inside who need help reaching the outside. "I tell faculty, 'Express your passion for a subject. Remember what compelled you to do this for a living.' I let them know I didn't choose this kind of work because I like diagramming sentences. Rather, I've always been amazed at the beauty and power of language."

Passion is the reason editors accept their insider-outsider role. "Ours is to reason why," says Birnbaum at Boston College. "And we can't live with ourselves if we're promoting—or protecting—bad ideas."

Yoe likes to daydream about the day she stops saying no. "The last magazine of my career will be one in which I've run everything everybody wanted, just as they wanted it. Then," she laughs, "when we've stopped editing, people will see just what it is that an editor does."

Insider-outsider (6) *An entertaining job with a great epitaph.*

Marsha Scott Gori has served for 10 years as editor of Bucknell World, *a tabloid that goes six times a year to 42,000 alumni, parents, students, faculty, staff, and friends of Bucknell University. In 1991,* Bucknell World *shared CASE's Grand Gold Award for tabloid publishing.*

Editorial Etiquette

When it comes to dealing with authors, every editor needs a guide to good manners
by Jay Heinrichs

Wait, I know what you're thinking. (If this seems like a cliche lead, remember that editors are professional collaborators; mind-reading is essential to their work.)

You're thinking: "What has dealing with authors got to do with me? My budget barely pays for the paper I print on, everything we do is staff-written, and I can't afford to pay for copy."

Assuming your question isn't entirely rhetorical, allow me to ask a couple of my own.

1. Why did Calvin Trillin, one of today's best literary humorists, do a monthly column in the *Nation* that only paid (as Trillin put it) "in the high two figures"?

Probable answers: Because the *Nation* was a change of pace from his job as a staff writer for the *New Yorker.* Because he was a close friend of the *Nation*'s legendary editor, Victor Navasky. Because Navasky allowed Trillin to write whatever he wanted. Because Trillin knew the *Nation* couldn't pay

any better. Because Navasky asked Trillin really, really nicely.

2. Why am I, an editor with considerably less talent who nonetheless has to put food on the table, doing this article for absolutely nothing?

Answers: Because I like showing off to colleagues. Because I like the excuse to call up a score of friendly editors at my magazine's expense and ask them for advice. Because I know CURRENTS can't pay any better. Because Andrea Barbalich, an assistant editor of this magazine, asked me really, really nicely.

Now think of why other people (including, possibly, yourself) write for magazines, and you may find more than a source of cheap writing. You may gain some insight into how to motivate your staff writers, get administrators to cooperate on the annual report, and make it so that the copy coming in needs little editing. If you figured out all that, you wouldn't have to read the rest of this article.

You might, however, feel the need for more specific advice. So here are thoughts on working with the five most common types of writers for campus periodicals and publications, followed by several rules of proper editorial conduct.

1. Staff writers

The biggest difference between outside writers and your own staff is that your employees are probably making more than the minimum wage. (Freelancers generally make less per hour than the kid who mows your lawn.)

There are other differences, too. Good staff writers take editing well. (They have to; you're their boss.) Better yet, they rarely *need* much editing, because every comment from you becomes a lesson for later assignments. Staff presumably understand the campus better than outsiders do, too, and they can cover fast-breaking events. In short, for the busy editor, in-house writers are a godsend.

They'd better be. Salary and benefits for one writer can easily exceed $30,000, an amount that can buy a lot of free-lance work. To get your money's worth with staff writers, you need to keep them improving, head off their boredom, and get them to avoid formulaic writing.

At my magazine, we rarely just divvy up writing among staff. Instead, we compete to get the stories we like into the magazine. Now and then we hold story idea sessions in which staffers pitch articles and then propose writers. If a writer is personally excited about a story and can convince the rest of us that he's the best one to do it, the assignment goes to him. No one gets a story as a chore.

Well, that's actually not true. Every publication has its must-do copy. But we let every writer pursue a story after her own heart as often as possible.

Staff writers demand at least as much attention as free-lancers do. I try to practice "management by hanging around." A basketball net in the office gets pretty heavy use when a writer has a problem she wants to discuss.

But most editors I talked with don't seem to need this kind of advice about working with in-house talent; they devote much time and care to their staffs. The problem is not how to use staff writers but when not to. Writers are not copy machines; they're stimulated when they get to work with outsiders.

2. Administrators

In calling colleagues around the country, I expected to hear a lot of great horror stories involving pushed-around editors and administrative *auteurs* who thought their every word deserved a marble tablet all its own.

But editors said the opposite was true: Most administrators were eager to get editorial expertise. "I have never had a problem dealing with anybody from a dean up, ever," Mary Helen Bowers states flatly. As director of educational information systems at Texas A&M University, she has a hypothesis about administrators.

"Maybe when you reach that level of the hierarchy," she says, "you realize that you need to let people do what they do well. Or maybe those who get promoted to that level are the kind of people who are like that already."

Even so, surely there are occasions when the relationship between editor and administrator falls apart. But editors are smart people, and the last place they're going to complain about their bosses is in a magazine their bosses read.

They're also smart enough to try to avoid conflict from the start—which is not always a good thing, according to Laura Freid, publisher of *Harvard* magazine. "There's a tremendous problem of self-censorship among editors," she says. "The problem with all our publications is that our readers tend to be silent. The loudest voice is the administration's."

So how do you keep a degree of professional independence without getting yourself fired? Editors suggest four ways.

1. First, get approval on all copy with the proper administrators. If anything, this might let you stretch copy a bit further; the administrator can be the censor, not you.

2. Make sure the administrator and you have the same goals in mind for the publication. Find out whether people are actually supposed to read the thing, or whether the administrator is frank about the piece being an expensive way to gratify donors and muckety-mucks.

3. Always put yourself in the administrator's shoes in a disagreement. Never, never pull one of those snotty "I'm a journalist and you're a bureaucrat" attitudes that we editors are prone to have.

4. As Woody Allen would say, show up a lot. If you edit a periodical, make sure you meet regularly with any interested administrators. Don't just talk stories; find out what's on their minds, what their goals and frustrations are. And let them know your own approach to serving the institution.

Ultimately, though, the quality of your work will depend on your ability to act as a professional and not as a shill. "The stronger editors have been recognized for going ahead and publishing what's right," says Freid at Harvard.

And what happens to those editors? Some advance to honorable positions in our profession, often at the same institution they started with. Others don't fare as well. One example: A friend of mine, a first-rate independent journalist, was forced to resign some years ago. His sin: He tried to publish a good story about sex education on campus.

3. Faculty

This is another story altogether. To have publications that reflect the full range of voices on campus, many editors feel obligated to risk using Ph.D.s with little or no experience in writing for a lay audience. "I'm convinced that an awful lot of scientists are semi-literate," sighs one publications director who works with professors daily.

Ask campus editors for a horror sto-

ry and most of the time they'll give you an anecdote about a faculty member. One such editor, who begs anonymity, tells about a time she asked a humanities professor for an essay on the rise of patriotism during the Gulf war. He came back with a piece titled, "Why I Don't Support the Troops in the Persian Gulf." The war's end saved the editor from making an embarrassing rejection.

Another editor says a faculty member once came to her with a recruitment brochure for the university's horticulture department. "He was enamored with the title he'd dreamed up for the piece: 'Deep in the Hort of Texas.' " She says it took a lot of persuasion to talk him out of the title.

Other editors complain of missed deadlines, tangles of jargon, and snubs by senior faculty who don't wish to condescend to the alumni unwashed. Yet these amateur writers hold the ideas—and the passion—that are the essence of higher education. Here are ways to call forth their voices.

• *Hold professors' writing up to a layperson's mirror.* Bowers at Texas A&M uses a software program called Rightwriter that measures a manuscript's complexity and reading level. "We can show the output to the professor and say, 'Gee, this is supposed to appeal to 17-year-olds, and you've written it to a postgraduate level,' " she says. "Occasionally people will dig their heels in, but not often."

• *Seek out faculty who actually know how to write.* Linda Granell, communications director for the University of California at Irvine, tries to work with professors who have written commentaries for newspapers. If you're not directly involved with your campus's op-ed program, check with your PR office to find out who the best faculty writers are.

• *If possible, pay a professor what you'd pay a good free-lancer.* "That way they end up being, in effect, a professional writer for us," says Mary Ruth Yoe, editor of the *University of Chicago Magazine*. "For some faculty, the amount of money I'm giving them seems good compared to what they don't get from journals."

4. Alumni

When writers won't work for money, sometimes they'll do it for love. Some editors have exploited that affection for alma mater.

Granted, not every institution commands the loyalty of my employer, whose graduates sometimes see Dartmouth more as a religion than a college. But other factors may motivate your alumni: the fascination many of them have with higher education, a chance to practice their skills outside the workplace, the flattery of being treated as a minor celebrity.

Janice Paskey, editor of *McGill News* at McGill University in Quebec, emphasizes that last motive. She started a program in January to draw on alumni egos and philanthropic tendencies.

By looking through class notes and review copies of books that come through her office, she finds alumni who've been published and asks them to donate a copy of their book to the university library. Then she has a bookplate done in calligraphy with the author's name and degree, puts it in the library's book, and sends a copy of the bookplate to the author as a thank-you.

"This helps create a corps of authors who are in touch with us," she says. "It's a way to make initial contact with our best alumni writers." Though the program is still new, she's hoping her efforts will bring better magazine articles and also keep students informed about alumni accomplishments.

5. Free-lance writers

Many editors I talked with are less than enamored of free-lancers. "The few times I've used them, I've had to do a lot of editing," says Granell of UCI. "I don't need to do that with my staff."

The problem may rest with editors who accept the writers who walk in the door looking for a job—any job. These writers are motivated for the most part by money or ego; many would happily go elsewhere for higher pay or more prestige. "One day I'm going to have these words needlepointed above my desk: 'Never accept articles from people who propose stories about themselves,' " says Chicago's Yoe. "The corollary is, 'Don't commission stories from people who tell you they ought to write for you.' "

If you rule out the free-lancers who happen to come to you, the alternative is to actively seek out the best writers you can discover. To do scholarly stories, Elise Hancock, editor of *Johns Hopkins Magazine*, looks for authors with "some scholarly background—people who would have been scholars if they had a less universal curiosity."

How do you find this sort of person? A common approach involves going to writers you've noticed elsewhere. After seeing good stories in other magazines and newspapers, McGill's Paskey calls the authors. "I express my admiration for their work and try to coax them down to the office—where we're really nice to them." Her approach: She sits them down with coffee or juice and unhurried conversation that focuses on their hopes and aspirations as writers.

After this, the trick is to match the right writer with the right story. "This is the single most important editorial decision," says Jim Collins, editor of the alumni tabloid *Dartmouth Life*. "If you hit the right subject, writers will agree to do it for less than what they'd otherwise charge. And it goes without saying that they'll put more energy into it and the result will be the best possible package for that story."

Proper protocol

No matter which types of authors you've recruited for your periodical or publication, you need to treat them well. This leads us to the etiquette of working with writers, from administrators to alumni to free-lancers. From fellow editors' advice, I've compiled the following guide to editing that even Emily Post might approve.

• *Confirm assignments in writing.* If you don't take the assignment seriously, the author surely won't. Offer as many suggestions, ideas, and supporting materials as you can; then give a firm but comfortable deadline.

An alternative, used by Hancock at Johns Hopkins, is to make a fairly general written assignment but then require a mid-course meeting after the writer has done some research. That way the writer helps nail down the story. The same technique could apply to recruitment copy or a section in the annual report.

Yoe at Chicago requires a short precis several weeks before the story itself is due. "At the very least, it gets the writer writing sooner," she says. "And it helps make sure we're both on the right track."

• *Don't keep the author guessing.* As soon as possible after the manuscript arrives, call with your reaction. Also give the writer an idea of when you'll publish the piece. If the schedule changes, let the writer know.

If the piece needs additional work, offer the writer the chance to make any major corrections or go over them by phone. Respect the author's work, and avoid hatchet jobs.

• *Pay whatever you can.* If you want writers to act professionally, you can't treat them as amateurs. Most campus editors pay between $200 and $1,500 for an article, depending on its length and subject and on the author's experience. Some editors will go as high as $3,000 for a particularly difficult story requiring a great deal of research.

Hancock at Johns Hopkins establishes a pay range when she assigns a story. The author gets the minimum for a minimally acceptable piece and the maximum for something special. "I usually end up paying the maximum," she confides, adding that the incentive often makes the writer do an extra draft or two instead of leaving the polishing to the editor.

On this same topic, pay on acceptance, not on publication. You wouldn't think of buying a lawn mower and holding off paying the hardware store until your grass needs cutting. And when you do publish the piece, send the writer several copies of the magazine, newsletter, brochure, or catalog along with a personal note.

Of course, these courtesies would appear small in more polite societies, where editors have the humility to practice true respectfulness. I once received a rejection slip from a Japanese magazine that began something like: "Upon reading this letter, you will soon become aware of the misfortune that has befallen you in submitting your undoubtedly brilliant work to such a base, ignorant editor as myself. My talents are so lacking that I have failed to see what must be the true extent of your genius." And so on.

A rejection like this might inspire a letter bomb from many Westerners, but the editor's intent was noble. Writers, like most people, will do a lot for a friend; the editor's trick, if it can be called that, is to *act* as a friend.

My mother would have put it this way (and often did): "Just try and be nice."

Jay Heinrichs is editor of Dartmouth Alumni Magazine *at Dartmouth College, a private institution of 4,000 students in Hanover, New Hampshire. The magazine was the 1991 winner of the Newsweek award for the Robert Sibley Magazine of the Year.*

Tapping Alumni Talent

How Dartmouth exploits graduates' loyalty to get great articles

Put yourself in this situation: You're editing an alumni magazine in the middle of the boonies. Your budget for writers is so small it almost doesn't exist, your institution lacks a journalism program, and your staff consists of several extremely talented writers. Who will do your stories?

When I faced that question four years ago as the new editor of the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, the answer seemed obvious: Play to our strength and staff-write everything. But I perversely chose almost the opposite: to assign as few features as possible to staff (including myself). Instead, I required each editor to convince the rest of us that he or she was the best writer for the story. When it seemed the best one might be elsewhere, we decided to look outside for most of our features and recruit top writers among Dartmouth's alumni.

The potential benefits seemed worth the effort. By having prestigious journalists write about the institution and its controversies, we could help keep the more PR-sensitive administrators from second-guessing the stories. These journalists could lend credibility to the magazine. Having terrific writers come to campus would duplicate the experience of working on a big publication—and thus stimulate us editors. And we would get the best writing possible.

At first, several obstacles stood in our way. We didn't know who those alumni writers were. We had no idea whether they would take a week or two out of their busy schedules to work for an alumni magazine. And we had no means to pay them—let alone bring them all the way to Hanover, New Hampshire (a five-hour drive from New York), or give them a decent place to stay.

Finding them turned out to be pretty easy. We asked the computer jocks in the alumni office to print out a list of all graduates who called themselves journalists. At the same time, I went back and read all the stories written by the magazine's interns over the years, checked into the careers of the best ones, and built files of their clips. Then I wrote to the top writers—novelists as well as journalists—and asked whether they'd be willing to work with us. The response has been overwhelming. Four out of five are enthusiastic. Some 50 first-rate alumni writers have agreed to write for us so far.

The money part was trickier. We could never pay these people what they were worth, but we felt obligated to pony up as much as we'd pay a free-lancer. We gutted the travel and entertainment budget and eliminated the professional development budget altogether. (Just meeting these great writers would constitute enough professional development for a while.) And by figuring ways to save money on production, we freed up money for the editorial budget.

Then we approached a commuter airline and wangled a trade—tickets from New York to tiny Lebanon, New Hampshire, in return for advertising space. A similar tradeout with the Dartmouth-owned Hanover Inn took care of lodging, and restaurants that owe us money for advertising help with wining and dining.

Writers do not live by board alone, however. Long before I assign them anything, I often drop alumni a note of praise when they publish a noteworthy piece in their own newspaper or magazine. When we finally bring them to campus, we try to make them feel like the VIPs they are. We set up meetings or talks with journalistically minded students, arrange dinners with faculty, and give them books and Dartmouth memor-

abilia to take home. Occasionally I'll even slip out with writers for the afternoon to discuss a story on the ski slopes or in a canoe.

And they have responded to the attention. We've had alumni take time off from such places as the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *National Lampoon*, and *Fortune* to write for us. Here's just a sampling of the results.

- The editor of *USA Today* did an essay on whether the press has been fair to Dartmouth. (It has, he concluded.)
- The national affairs editor of *Newsweek* spent three weeks on campus to research a story on campus free speech—or the lack of it.
- The chief economics correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report* recently completed a major story on Dartmouth's groundbreaking research into the medical profession's lack of knowledge about the efficacy of its own procedures.
- The editor of *Yankee* magazine wrote about the "sweet pain" of nostalgia.
- An editor at *Sports Illustrated* covered a scientific squabble between Dartmouth and Berkeley over the extinction of dinosaurs—as if it were a sports rivalry.

Occasionally, the writers themselves dream up these ideas. More often, though, staff members try to think of stories that will match the writers perfectly.

After establishing a relationship with an alumnus who is editor of a major food magazine, for instance, we began searching for the kind of piece he would do best. One problem: He is an extremely busy man who works on the West Coast. A trip to campus is out of the question in the short term.

The answer: Have him do a straight-faced review of Dartmouth cafeteria food. Because he can't come here, we plan to send it out there. We'll employ some big freshman to load up a tray (while a photographer takes pictures); then we'll pack it in dry ice and have the editor thaw it in a microwave (while a photographer on the West Coast takes pictures).

The review, we hope, will accompany a roundup of campus eateries with an introduction reminding readers that an institution is what it eats. The food editor hasn't actually agreed to this yet, but how could he say no?

Few alumni have. More than two-thirds of our features now have class numerals behind the bylines. And our staff has been free to write the stories we're best at: from an essay on research into ancient sexy novels to an encomium to electronic mail, from a gallery of latter-day prophets to tales of Dartmouth's greatest dropouts. This policy helped win the magazine a CASE gold medal for periodical writing last year.

The program hasn't been free of flaws, mind you. Two years ago we invited Chris Miller, Dartmouth Class of '63 and co-writer of the movie *Animal House*, to come to campus and tell how fraternities had changed since the days that inspired the film. He wrote a wonderful story, reporting that the kids were still having good (albeit less dangerous) fun.

At the same time, though, he got into a well-publicized mud fight on campus. ("Alumni Magazine brings back 'Animal House' writer," read a front-page caption in the student newspaper. The photo showed Miller, beer in hand, encrusted with fraternity dirt.) And he wrote a considerably raunchier version for *Playboy*. Students and administrators were, shall we say, less than pleased.

But our readers seem to love seeing their classmates report on what's going on at Dartmouth. As editors, we're excited to work with some of the best in the business. And our magazine has a legitimate shot at doing what an alumni magazine does best: surprising readers with compelling information that brings them closer to alma mater.—JH

When Borrowing Becomes Burglary

Recognizing—and fighting—plagiarism
by John Shea

Even before *Duke Magazine* won the Sibley Award as the top alumni magazine of 1986, some readers were apparently impressed. So impressed, it turns out, that they decided to copy *Duke's* distnctive look.

The people at Duke University—who had spent time, effort, and lots of money to create that look a few years ago—weren't flattered. It was a case, says Editor Robert Bliwise, of another institution "just grabbing our design scheme and running with it." He calls it "a rip-off."

The other magazine's attempt to duplicate *Duke Magazine* did not go unnoticed. Bliwise says the incident is well-known in CASE circles. In fact, when I spoke with Andrew Beierle, editor of *Emory Magazine*, he mentioned the matter independently and called the other institution's actions "almost laughable."

But plagiarism is scarcely laughable. And one might expect that by the time they reach their positions in institutional advancement, writers and editors would have a clear idea of what plagiarism is. As David May, director of communications at Syracuse University, puts it, today's typical writer or editor probably learned all about plagiarism in the sixth grade—after he or she got caught turning in a paper copied from the encyclopedia.

But participants in a CASE District II conference last January demonstrated that not everyone agrees on just what's right or wrong. At a session on "Ethics in Action," May presented a series of hypothetical cases for listeners to consider. This was one:

Faced with the need to write 500 words on the value of a liberal-arts

education, you lift it from five different viewbooks from other institutions and piece it together with new transitions. The admissions director and dean think it's fine. Do you print it?

Five of the 19 respondents said yes. And May insists that in practice, the number is even higher. "Nearly everybody's done that," he says.

The nature of the beast

Simply put, there's some uncertainty about what constitutes plagiarism, especially when it involves something more subtle than stolen words. Plagiarism is a "difficult ethical issue because it's such a slippery one," says Bernard Carman, director of public information and community relations at Lafayette College. How, for instance, do you distinguish legitimate use of others' material—borrowing in a general fashion or drawing inspiration—from outright theft?

Rachel Morton, editor of *Contact* at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, gave a typical response. At first, she expressed doubt that plagiarism is an issue in advancement, especially since many magazines have specific audiences and largely go their own way. But upon reflection, she acknowledged that she's "borrowed in moments of crisis from other magazines." And, she adds, in looking over other institutions' magazines, she occasionally realizes, "Oh, God, *that's* where that great idea came from!"

But Morton's use of the term "borrow" makes it clear that she finds such use of material less an immoral act than a sign of the inescapable limits on an individual editor at one magazine.

Similarly, Carman maintains that despite what some unrealistic observers might say, none of us has a "bottomless reservoir of individual creativity." Each of us is influenced by what others do; a particular look, especially one that's successful elsewhere, may appeal to many editors. (As Skip Mason Shakespeare, editor of the *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Bulletin*, says, "For a while, every magazine looked like *Time*.")

Laura Freid, assistant vice president for university relations at Boston University and editor of *Bostonia*, agrees. She calls plagiarism "the most obvious and flagrant abuse" facing editors in advancement. (One blatant example she cites involved a set of *Bostonia* articles on stress. A profit-making consulting firm reproduced the articles, without permission or attribution, and sold them to clients.)

Yet, echoing Carman, Freid observes that "in this country, imitation is the way to success." It's a cultural problem, she emphasizes, one that goes well beyond the communications business. Such imitation "is not what I call plagiarism."

On the one hand, then, is plagiarism, the equivalent of theft. On the other hand are less definite and less accusatory terms such as "borrowing," "imitating," and "drawing inspiration." The issue is tricky, especially when, as Rachel Morton says, "We all read each other's magazines."

From influence to infringement

Plagiarism may be difficult to define, but it's easy to imagine. Even editors and writers who haven't had much experience with plagiarism agree on likely scenarios.

Ann Duffield, director of university relations at the University of Pennsylvania, believes it would most likely occur when a person "who wears too many hats" has to come up with something usable quickly and is frantic. Boston's Freid pictures "people who are harried" and have little time to produce, for example, a viewbook or fund-raising brochure. Such harried or frantic people, in a creative dry spell, are probably those most likely to steal from other sources.

When I heard that *Notre Dame Magazine* Editor Walton R. Collins, speaking at a CASE conference last spring, had advised listeners to "steal," I wondered how he feels about plagiarism. In conversation, he quickly clarifies. After remarking that "designers, I suspect, do a little stealing," he says his advice was restricted to *ideas*. It's both legitimate and sensible, he argues, to seize upon an attractive idea and apply it in a different context. If the original concept were slavishly followed, the result would be plagiarism. But "in the world of ideas," he continues, "we borrow all the time."

Collins offers a specific example. After seeing an article on student living quarters called "A (Dorm) Room of One's Own" in the *Brown Alumni Monthly*, he thought, "That would make a good article for us!" Indeed, since the general context (Notre Dame) and the particulars (a different pool of students and their rooms) would be quite different, he felt his magazine had a perfect right to use the idea. This would be an instance of victimless borrowing—or more precisely, a sharing of ideas among parties with similar interests. This isn't plagiarism, Collins concluded; if it were, CURRENTS, which offers many good and usable ideas each issue, "would be guilty of promoting it all the time."

Robert Bliwise of Duke also sees borrowing as both common and permissible. *Duke Magazine*, he says, often derives inspiration for an article from a news source but then proceeds to "make use of Duke expertise." Editors take "an idea in the most general sense and give it a special cast."

Carman of Lafayette expresses a similar attitude toward borrowing from other sources. Whether such use is plagiarism, he says, depends largely on "how well you have used the general ideas to address your own individual situation."

He cites as a hypothetical example *The Pennsylvania Gazette*'s issue last spring on the question of university investment in South Africa. If another institution were planning an article on its own South African investments, Carman would recommend looking at the *Gazette* to see what had been done—and done well. "There's nothing wrong with accepting a good idea and adapting it," he says.

But what if the other magazine used sidebars on certain topics, or political cartoons from around the world, or a map of South Africa on the cover—as the *Gazette* did? How many elements can you pick up before inspiration turns into plagiarism? There is, Carman says, no categorical answer.

Who gets hurt

On the surface, the victims of plagiarism seem obvious: the author of the plagiarized piece, the source magazine or institution, the profession itself. David May of Syracuse agrees that "personal feelings run high" when plagiarism is the issue; often, those whose work has been used feel violated and are all the more upset if the perpetrators seem to be getting away with it.

Yet, May adds, plagiarists may hurt themselves and their own institutions more than they hurt the original writer. There's the potential for embarrassment and other repercussions if they get caught. In addition, a plagia-

rized piece may well be incoherent and undigested. How effective will the hypothetical 500 words on the value of a liberal-arts education be if they come from five different sources?

On the whole, May downplays the issue of plagiarism and feels there are more significant ethical problems in advancement today—in particular, the problem of institutional misrepresentation. But he concedes that there are instances when plagiarism becomes a serious offense.

The case of *The Practical Penn* is such an instance. According to Ann Duffield, the University of Pennsylvania recently discovered that another institution had published a student handbook bearing a strong resemblance to Penn's successful and widely praised guide for students. (The design consultants who worked on Penn's handbook, themselves concerned parties, brought the knock-off to the university's attention.)

The new handbook's cover and much inside followed Penn's "almost to a T," Duffield says. "The graphic elements were almost exactly the same, although not nearly as well designed." She calls it "clear-cut plagiarism."

It would be different, she suggests, if the other institution had studied *The Practical Penn* and applied what it learned to its own situation. But Duffield found little difference between the two publications—the second one was a demonstration of "professional laziness." *The Practical Penn*, she continues, "cost a lot in terms of brain time" and money. For the other institution to help itself to the results of that expense "really is a criminal act."

David May agrees that, in such a case, there is an aggrieved party. A publication like *The Practical Penn*, he says, is important in student recruitment: Like a sales pitch, it helps in the head-to-head competition between institutions. That's why this particular case of plagiarism hurts more than people's feelings. It harms the University of Pennsylvania in practical terms.

Fighting back

Different institutions, of course, respond differently to plagiarism. Carman of Lafayette College recalls that when he was working elsewhere, another institution's staff members copied much of the design of a viewbook he'd produced. He took no action, primarily because it didn't seem worth the trouble. *His* publication had worked; *theirs*, with a different context, did not. In this case, he felt, vice was its own punishment.

Bliwise handled Duke's situation similarly, perhaps because the other institution's "ineptness [was] there for all to see." As it turns out, the other magazine has since changed editors, and Bliwise says the new editor promises that the magazine will establish its own identity.

But if a situation arose that demanded more initiative, Bliwise says he would try to "reach to the executive ranks of the offending institution." His first step would be to send copies of both the original and plagiarized versions to the other institution's president. No chief, he points out, likes to be embarrassed.

Such a method would probably suffice—if the aggrieved party is satisfied by the response. If not, there's always legal recourse. Although the University of Pennsylvania doesn't plan to take action in the case of *The Practical Penn*, Duffield notes that Penn has used its legal counsel to contact offending institutions in the past.

Support and sensitivity

Plagiarism isn't limited to the advancement field, of course. The question comes up everywhere people write, edit, or design, and the mainstream media grapple frequently with cases and accusations. In fact, Lafayette's Carman recounted two instances when national commercial publications plagiarized his material, and Collins of Notre Dame cited a time a distant daily paper copied word for word an editorial he'd written for a local South Bend, Indiana, newspaper.

Still, as I've mentioned, advancement professionals disagree on how widespread plagiarism is in the field—or whether it's a problem at all. But since so many institutional publications never go beyond a particular college, university, or school community, plagiarism can easily go undetected. And as the risk of discovery goes down, the temptation to lift material from a distant institution can grow.

How can advancement's publications professionals spot—and fight—plagiarism? More important, how can we be sure we aren't guilty ourselves? Here are a few guidelines.

- *Know thyself.* One way to judge if you've crossed the line between fair use and misuse is to consider whether you'd be ashamed if the person whose work you've emulated saw your version. For example, if you picked up a story idea from another magazine and attacked it from your institution's perspective and in your own periodical's style, you'd probably feel more proud than guilty if the original writer saw your piece. But if you used the same lead, approach, graphic treatment, or sources, you might get uncomfortable.
- *Know where to turn.* Boston's Laura Freid suggests that the temptation to steal may be greater for relatively isolated editors and writers who lack professional contacts outside their own institutions. Organizations like CASE, she says, can provide a support system. An editor, bolstered by the knowledge of shared professional standards, can feel a little more confident when telling a demanding vice president that certain things are not legitimate, she explains.

In addition, professional interaction increases the chances that others throughout the field will see and know your publications. This may make your ideas more accessible to "borrowers," but at the same time, it increases the chances of someone's noticing if another institution plagiarizes your work. And finally, if you cultivate relationships with your peers, you'll be better able to borrow their ideas legitimately—with permission.

- *Know the problem exists.* Plagiarism might not be running rampant among institutional publications—but even one case is too many. The real solution may lie simply in cultivating a greater awareness of the potential for abuse. Simply put, we must be sensitive to the possibility of plagiarism—ours or anyone else's—before we can prevent it.

John Shea is manager of The Compass, *the employee tabloid at the University of Pennsylvania. Shea has shared several CASE medals for periodical writing. Penn is a private university of 23,000 students in Philadelphia.*

What's Wrong with Alumni Periodicals

Expert advice on how to make yours better
by Walton R. Collins

Real magazines don't end up in the wastebasket the day they slide through the mail slot. But a good many alumni periodicals do.

That, claim the editors of the country's best alumni magazines, is because a lot of their colleagues don't think of the periodicals they edit as real magazines. Neither, consequently, do their readers, who flip briefly to the class notes and skim the rest.

How can you bring your publication up to the standards of the best magazines? We asked the the editors of the CASE Top 10 alumni periodicals, along with several professional observers, to share their views. Here are their ideas on what's wrong in the field—and how you can make your alumni periodical better.

The rich get richer; the poor...

Even though many alumni periodicals look better now than they did a few years ago, the experts frequently find the writing in them poor, colorless, or hyperbolic; the presentation timid; the topics unimaginative; and the overall package unplanned and haphazard.

But the best of the breed are good and getting better, these editors say. Andrew W.M. Beierle, director of university periodicals at Emory University, detects an "aspiration toward quality" that indicates "a growing recognition by university administrators that a quality publication serves a multitude of purposes."

The leading alumni publications "are competitive with good commercial magazines," says Ceil Cleveland, editor of *Columbia* magazine. But she sees little in the way of a "middle class," and the poor periodicals seem to her "really poor."

The key to quality, Cleveland adds, is institutional commitment. "Those colleges and universities that make the commitment do so with enough money and good staffing to make a truly good product. Those with a poor product expect someone already on staff to do it with his/her left hand, without help or proper support and budget," she explains.

Some institutions pay lip service to quality but fail to furnish adequate resources, notes Ann Granning Bennett, a publications consultant who won prizes when she was publications director at Lewis and Clark College. "They fail to consider the overworked publications staff, the lack of a designer, a skimpy photography file, and perhaps even the absence of enough major faculty research on which to base magazine content."

Such schools need to realize that "They compete for readership and attention with their more professional brethren and other media," notes Spyros Andreopoulos, editor of *Stanford Medicine*. If alumni periodicals are not "as good or better in terms of content, writing quality, and graphics, they will be ignored," he warns.

Handsome is as handsome does

Some administrators confuse better with prettier. Many "lesser" periodicals show "an alarming trend: overdesign, often overpowering a mediocre idea with splashy graphics," according to Paul Desruisseaux, assistant editor of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and former editor of alumni magazines at the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Southern California.

"Most schools now buy graphic services, so their stuff looks good," observes Elise Hancock, editor of *Johns Hopkins Magazine*. "This backfires when the content turns out to be the same old bumph, because one was led by the graphics to expect something better."

Not everyone believes that periodical design is improving. "Alumni magazines are either not designed at all or designed without attention to the contents," complains Laura Freid, editor of Boston University's *Bostonia*. "People do not read magazines, they flip through them. Without visual design, the reader is not encouraged to explore the contents."

Design failures are heavily responsible for the "lifelessness" of some college periodicals, according to former CURRENTS executive editor Anne Lowrey Bailey. "Magazines are inhibited by dull headlines and trite or bad graphics," she says.

Substance—and style

Weak design, however, is only one of three cardinal sins committed by alumni periodicals, says George Keller, former editor of *Columbia Today*, and now a senior vice president of the consulting firm Barton-Gillet. The other two: "poor story ideas and hyperbolic writing, resulting in loss of credibility."

Writing deficiencies, in fact, were cited frequently by the Top 10 editors as the major reason why readers often carry alumni publications directly from the mail drop to the wastebasket.

The chief culprits are "hack-written articles and derivative news items that sound like they come directly from press releases," says Cleveland. Such writing has "no verve and no personality—and is no good."

Robert M. "Dusty" Rhodes, editor of Brown University's *Alumni Monthly*, says he deplores the "generally poor writing I find reflected in magazine after magazine coming into my office. Editors have got to make the reader want to read."

John Bethell, editor of *Harvard Magazine*, cites "sub-par writing and editing," while Bailey blames colorless copy for turning away readers. Campus editors, she suggests, should not underestimate "the value of drama, humor, and human interest."

Freid warns of boring articles "written for an audience of one: the professor or the president, for example. Editors need to realize that if they don't engage the readers with the material, they are really not communicating. Articles have to be entertaining as well as informative."

Hype springs eternal

Freid's assessment points to a more fundamental problem: confusion on the part of some editors of the role of a campus periodical.

Most are so "parochial and con-

cerned with institutional trivia or nostalgia" that they fail to deal with substantive issues—"topics of interest to educated readers regardless of institutional affiliation," notes Beierle.

Anthony A. Lyle, editor of *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, also deplores "the parochial approach to content" many editors show. Desruisseaux adds: "Stories often seem to cloister a campus instead of ventilating it."

Alumni magazines "must serve as consciousness raisers, not as purveyors of fluff and puff," Andreopoulos insists. Hancock complains as well that many magazines indulge in "too much hype editorially."

Rhodes, who has been the editor of Top 10 magazines at three universities in his 35-year career, sums up the problem of hype this way: "A lot of editors have the feeling that they must ballyhoo the institution on every page instead of letting it speak for itself through its deeds. Some editors feel compelled to tell the readers how great 'The Big Blue' is, how much more wonderful than other schools, especially in places where there are competing state schools.

"In alumni pieces, let the activities and accomplishments of the people profiled speak for themselves; don't hit the readers over the head to make sure they don't miss it."

Many periodicals fail to establish an identity, says MIT's John I. Mattill, editor of the 1984 Sibley Award-winner, *Technology Review*: "The alumni magazine becomes more a creature of the institution's ego than a vehicle for generating alumni interest."

Mattill recognizes the dilemma this creates for some editors. "This is not to say that an alumni magazine should not represent its institution's successes. Nor do I think editors should spend every moment seeking the institution's weaknesses and penetrating the armor that surrounds them. The problem is simply to be a good journalist: to represent and appeal to the readers' presumed interests."

When readers' interests diverge from the institution's, Mattill continues, the question arises of "the editor's freedom to interpret and even to criticize the institution he/she serves." As he sees it, "The editor has to understand that the institution is paying his/her salary and bills, and if there is a reasonable statement of the institution's position, the editor better embrace and report it. He/she can, and should, also report other points of view, of course."

If the format fits, keep it

Another question for editors is how to use their resources to best effect—without overreaching. Most of the experts notice a shift from tabloids to magazines. But some question whether that's wise.

Bennett warns against creating a magazine "where no magazine should exist" simply because some institutional officer thinks the magazine format "makes the school look big-time." She adds that as far as she's concerned, "One good, tight, concise newsletter is worth a thousand magazines with fluffy content."

Desruisseaux agrees. "I think a number of periodicals—not just a few—in either tabloid or magazine format could be much stronger if they were newsletters. That format would be more in line with the financial and human resources available, and the staff would have the chance to do a smashing job within their limits. But for some silly reason newsletters seem to be regarded as a lesser form."

Similarly, a tabloid might be better than a magazine—depending on the institution's needs. "Tabloids are for quick and inexpensive dissemination of information," Andreoupoulos says.

Words from the wise

The Top 10 editors offer some additional advice to their colleagues:

• *Care about your product.* "Care enough to bludgeon administrators for adequate budget and talented staff," Cleveland says. "Care enough about your institution to make it look good and feel good about itself."

• *Make the case for a better budget.* Bethell recommends pointing out to administrators "how important the periodical is as a symbolic artifact of the institution."

• *Remember your audience.* Hancock reminds editors that "Alumni don't have to read this material; if it's more than you would care to know about your alma mater, don't put it in the magazine."

• *Be credible.* "No one who has attended an institution for four years comes away believing that everything the institution does is absolutely first-rate," says Rhodes. "To be told in the pages of the alumni magazine, issue after issue, that everything is wonderful and there are no problems—that's just unbelievable. Cover your institution as honestly as you can."

• *Examine—and emulate—excellence.* If Bailey had her way, all periodical editors would study *Esquire* magazine, which, like most alumni periodicals, goes to an educated audience with general interests. "*Esquire*," she says, "is probably the best magazine in the nation; its editorial planning can be breathtaking. The writing and presentation of articles are superb and in tune with contemporary audiences."

In addition, Beierle urges colleagues to emulate *Time*, *Science 85*, or *Atlantic Monthly*, and to "write real stories on interesting topics."

• *Keep up with other professional publications.* "Read," Bennett insists. "Read the top 10 magazines. Read *The Chronicle of Higher Education* cover-to-cover each week to know what's going on in the academic world. You will begin to see more and more stories on your campus."

The Chronicle's Desruisseaux is baffled by evidence that many campus editors "don't frequent the same newsstands" he does. "They don't see that what they are doing is really no different from what the editors of *Rolling Stone* or *Esquire* or a hundred other periodicals are doing: finding ways to handle material, to package stories and ideas, and to graphically present the whole enchilada.

"Editors should be reading the best magazine writers. The writing in some campus periodicals forces one to conclude that many staff writers don't even read newspapers."

• *Keep your material interesting.* "Don't bore yourself," Freid urges editors. "If the material is boring to you, it will be boring to the readers and it will not be read. Do what your professional instincts tell you to do, without worrying too much about central administration or single individuals. You can always ask forgiveness."

"But if you don't try," she adds, "No one will recognize your talent."

Walton R. Collins is editor of Notre Dame Magazine, *a regular Top 10 periodical and twice winner of the Sibley Award. He says he agrees with most of his colleagues' advice. This article is based on a survey conducted by Virginia Carter Smith, former CASE senior vice-president for communications.*

Section 3
CURRENTS Reprints: Ideas and Innovations

Making a Statement

Why you should—or shouldn't—write statements of editorial mission, goals, and policy
by Robert J. Bliwise

The first principle of composition, according to Strunk and White in *The Elements of Style*, is "Foresee or determine the shape of what is to come and pursue that shape."

Most writers work with a game plan as they take an article from concept to completion. But do you as an editor have such a plan to help you shape your periodical? If so, is it enough to have a strategy in mind, or should you put it on paper?

If you asked most editors how they express their editorial vision, they'd point to their magazines, tabloids, newspapers, and newsletters. Many could also point to a supporting document of some kind—typically a mission statement, an annual list of objectives, or a detailed account of editorial policies. The editors who've gone to the trouble to document their vision swear that such statements make the difference between an effective periodical and a shapeless one. But others use words ranging from "limiting" to "dangerous" to describe such formal documents.

The question is how—and whether—to outline some version of your vision. I asked several CASE periodicals professionals just how valuable they think these different types of statements can be.

The mission statement

A mission statement—usually a few sentences outlining a periodical's overall purpose—is particularly appropriate for new periodicals and for new editors. Boosters of the mission statement see it as a device to:

- define the editorial range of the periodical,
- encourage the editor to consider the special characteristics of the institution he or she represents,
- state the importance of good communication,
- build confidence in editorial judgment, and
- keep editors on a steady course.

Writing in the *Handbook of Institutional Advancement*, Elise Hancock, editor of *Johns Hopkins Magazine*, suggests that drafting a statement of purpose is a basic start-up task for periodical editors. The statement, she says, should "function as a touchstone." Hancock adds that the statement should run no more than 25 words; this requirement "forces you to focus your ideas."

Few of the editors I spoke to would be eager to condense their overall vision to 25 words. But they do agree on several benefits of having some outline of editorial mission.

To begin with, a mission statement can help you establish authority by providing early assurance that editorial direction meshes with institutional values. Such a signal can give administrators and readers confidence in your editorial approach. And if they're enthusiastic about the destination of the publication, these people are less likely to take violent exception to occasional missteps.

In addition, such a statement can keep you on track. A mission statement serves as a prod to the editor who crafted it and expects to abide by it. If you wrote the statement, you'll generally want to uphold it in practice.

Finally, if you have a staff, a statement serves as a guidepost for all who work on your periodical. In expressing the philosophy that defines the product, a mission statement unites your staff members. It can help them ensure that their editorial instincts remain sound, that editorial hubris doesn't cause them to stray from their central reason for being, and that they pull together as a team.

When Linda Grashoff became editor of the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* two-and-a-half years ago, she replaced an 18-year veteran. "With a new editor coming on, a lot of people were afraid of the prospect of change," she says. So in a memo on "Editorial Content and Style," she stressed the importance of keeping the magazine "firmly rooted in Oberlin people, values, and history." She then outlined a magazine that would "entertain and inform alumni and friends, particularly about Oberlin College and each other, and generally by presenting Oberlinians who are newsworthy and knowledgeable."

When *Notre Dame Magazine* editor Walt Collins came on board in 1983, he perceived "the clearest kind of understanding in the minds of key people about the question of who runs the magazine, what its relationship is to the university, and where it stands in the overall institutional advancement group."

Even so, Collins fished a mission statement out of the files and polished it up. It describes the magazine as "universal in scope and Catholic in viewpoint." The magazine seeks, in part, "to provide continuing education to Notre Dame alumni by examining issues relating to public affairs and personal lifestyles."

The Oberlin and Notre Dame statements were meant for internal consumption. But such visions of editorial mission can also speak to a much wider audience.

In our opening editorial three years ago, we described our intent to make the new *Duke Magazine* "compelling in its content, striking in its visual impression." The plan was to "provide a sense of the intellectual dynamism that characterizes the Duke community." A continuing theme would be the interplay between university and society, with a focus on "interesting people and interesting ideas."

Mission statements share common themes—and sometimes common language. For example, they often:

- *Express assumptions about the institution.* At Notre Dame, the magazine represents "a university which is striving to achieve academic distinction while maintaining its roots in the Roman Catholic tradition."
- *Emphasize the role of the periodical in the life of the institution.* This happens especially when the statement's audience is internal. Mary Ruth Yoe, who formerly led the Alumni Magazine Consortium based at Johns Hopkins, is helping to plan a new magazine at Washington College, her alma mater. The mission statement she

helped craft says the magazine hopes to keep "alumni and other friends involved with the college and with each other in a way that reflects intellectual inquiry and a sense of community."

• *Define editorial turf.* In *Duke Magazine*'s case, the editorial lens extends to "Duke perspectives on the weighty issues of the day—social, political, educational." And for the Southern Methodist University *Mustang*, editor Patricia LaSalle specifically stresses coverage of academic life, with such items as class notes, alumni events, and sports coverage playing "supporting roles."

• *Outline the basic tasks of any good periodical.* To set the scene for *Colgate Scene*, editor James Leach says the tabloid "intends to inform and entertain an audience that has an inherent interest in the academic and extracurricular activities at Colgate." Informing and entertaining are staples of editorial mission statements—and appropriately so, since they rank high among the goals of good journalism.

The year-by-year plan

Year-by-year statements of objectives are useful to many editors—and inescapable for most. Diligent objectives-writers say this practice helps them:

• remind themselves that periodicals must change as their audiences and their institutions change,

• identify areas in the periodical that need strengthening,

• avoid old, tired editorial approaches,

• think about major issues facing the institution, and

• make the editorial staff an equal partner in a larger planning process.

Often, framing objectives is part of institutional planning. At Duke, for example, the magazine faces the same requirements for writing an annual report as do the other alumni and development offices. So every summer we take a retrospective look at the year past and set down goals for the year ahead. Among our most recent goals: to find new sources of story ideas, to encourage more faculty-written contributions, to give more attention to student life, to enhance news of the alumni association, to strengthen the editorial advisory board, and to give more attention to attracting voluntary subscriptions.

While mission statements dwell on what's enduring in the periodical, objectives statements accent what's new. This year, *Tulanian* editor David Fyten introduced goals ranging from covering the centennial of Newcomb College (Tulane's women's college) to forming his magazine's first editorial advisory board. In 1985, objectives for *Duke Magazine* prompted us to prepare well in advance to mark the retirement of president Terry Sanford and the inauguration of his successor, H. Keith H. Brodie.

Johns Hopkins Magazine's 1986 strategic planning document covers a broad range of current concerns, including staff structure, use of inside color, plans for a redesign, accounting procedures, readership surveys, liaisons with various constituencies, coverage of relatively neglected divisions of the university, and sources of revenue. And recent SMU documents have discussed design elements, including the magazine's logo, typeface, paper stock, and color use. "Our overall editorial philosophy stays pretty much the same, but our specific short-term goals to achieve the philosophy may change each year," says LaSalle.

Mission statements tend to be lofty in spirit and general in scope; annual objectives statements are usually specific and concrete. While mission statements are useful hedges against excessive editorial exuberance, statements of objectives are guards against editorial complacency. They're a convenient measuring stick for gauging editorial performance.

Policy statements

If a great editorial debate is raging over editorial game plans, it centers on written policy statements.

The difference between a mission statement and a policy statement is that of strategy and tactics. The mission statement provides the periodical's editorial framework, or strategy. The policy statement is specific and comprehensive—the tactical side of the editorial game plan. A policy statement might cover such editorial concerns as who, if anyone, has prior approval rights over copy; what kinds of campus controversies will see the light of publication or if openness is to prevail always; what sorts of letters are suitable for a letters column; and how the staff divides responsibilities.

To their fans, such statements:

• orient staff and senior administrators to editorial thinking,

• ensure issue-to-issue consistency in every phase of production, and

• avoid political battles that could later undermine editorial authority.

But to the nonbelievers, editorial policy statements only serve to:

• limit editorial flexibility,

• encourage a committee approach to editorial decision making, and

• provide only flimsy protection to embattled editors.

Many editors assert that editorial policies and procedures can't be codified. Some believe it is even dangerous to commit such things to paper. Efforts at codifying, they say, only invite excessive regulation of the editorial product—from either within or outside the editorial staff.

As Tulane's Fyten puts it, "You don't want an elaborate, detailed statement of how a magazine should be organized editorially. That kind of approach encourages formatting—a shopping list of constituencies you need to cover. You run the risk of coming up with dull and irrelevant material just to satisfy your format."

When she was editor of *Columbia*, Ceil Cleveland avoided policy documents. "I made myself terribly vulnerable by refusing to put up with a lot of strictures. But I preferred to live with the danger that comes with freedom. When some big policy issue came up—releases for photos, the kinds of ads we would take, whether to consider printing unprintable words—we preferred to address it after the fact. But we had the luxury of being independent; no one challenged us." (Cleveland is now assistant vice president for news, publications, and media relations at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.)

And when editorial push comes to administrative shove, how much good can come from a written policy? Says Collins of Notre Dame: "An editor gets and exercises authority by being a professional and by being accepted as a professional. That equation requires someone who is truly professional and knows magazine publishing and knows how to edit for readers. It also requires administrators who accept the professional's philosophy of editing and are willing to give him or her the freedom to pursue it.

"If you have such an arrangement, you probably don't need anything so formal as a policy statement. If you don't have that arrangement, a policy

statement probably won't do you any good. I suspect there are a lot of editors sitting around with model statements who are harassed daily, being told what to run and not to run. If you're counting on a piece of paper to protect you, it probably won't."

Bill Noblitt, executive editor of *Washington University Magazine*, agrees that a policy statement is no place for careless prose: "If you're not careful, your words can come back to haunt you."

But he is a proponent of written policies—and his seven-page statement attests to that. He compares a policy statement to a road map: "It allows you to focus on a destination that you hope to someday reach. The more specific your map, the easier it is to reach your destination."

His policy statement begins with the mission of interpreting and advancing Washington University "in an honest and balanced manner" and of creating "informed good will" through coverage of university ideas, research, and issues. The statement goes on to define the magazine's audience (largely alumni); its content ("analysis of and reporting on issues facing Washington University"); and its point of view, including the assumption that the magazine will be "a credible publication with integrity." The statement outlines reporting arrangements, staff responsibilities, and the production timetable—from issue planning through post-publication readership surveys.

Colgate's James Leach, in a one-page policy statement, delves into some of the same aspects of editing. In a sec-

An Outside Opinion

Two commercial-magazine editors tell why they don't have a written editorial policy

When he gave life to *Life* 50 years ago, Henry Luce knew just what he wanted. Luce's vision of capturing the American experience with photographs had its fullest expression in his written statement of *Life*'s broad reach and high standards.

In the world of commercial magazines, photojournalism lives on. But the written policy statement may no longer be a given.

Few editors—whether their periodicals are commercial or institutional—would question the need to establish, in practice, a coherent editorial policy. But when I spoke to CASE professionals for the accompanying article, I found sharply differing views on the value of committing editorial policy to writing. Does the same question arise in the world of commercial magazines? I asked two well-known editors—both members of *Duke Magazine*'s editorial advisory board—whether they think it's good policy to write policy.

Editorial policy reflects two things, says Clay Felker, whose commercial magazine credits include founding *New York* magazine, editing *Esquire* and *The Village Voice*, and, now, serving as a consultant for *U.S. News & World Report*.

"First, policy stems from the central focus of the magazine," he says. "And the magazine is helped enormously if it has a name that makes it perfectly obvious what its function is—*Skiing* or *New York*, for example.

"Second, policy comes out of the mind of the editor, from how the editor interprets his or her mission. In the case of *New York*, we tried many times to come up with some sort of position paper, but the best thing we could say is that *New York* is about New York. I had chosen all of the editors; they respected my point of view; and editorial policy wasn't something we discussed an awful lot. In effect, we had a bunch of like minds."

In Felker's view, policy statements "engraved in stone" overlook one of the basic tenets of magazine journalism: The successful editorial product is one that's smart enough to evolve. "A magazine is an attitudinal response to a particular set of conditions at a moment in time. Inevitably, economic conditions, political conditions, and above all cultural conditions change. Either the editor is flexible enough to wrestle with those changes, or the magazine gets a new editor, or the magazine dies."

The alumni magazine, Felker adds, has a much easier time than its commercial counterparts in focusing its content. But he sees no excuse for the absence of an editorial vision. "The institution provides the fixed point around which the contents will revolve. What the editor must decide is the question of point of view. Does the editor want to focus just on people and events, or on the intellectual and cultural and even spiritual life of the institution?"

Newsweek On Campus Editor Jerry Footlick echoes Felker's feelings about written policy statements. *On Campus*, distributed as a college-newspaper insert, began in the fall of 1982. The only planning document was "a standard corporate business plan," he says.

From the business side, *On Campus* was seen as a way to build readership for *Newsweek*—in particular, a young, well-educated, upscale readership. Editorially, Footlick and his staff decided it should be "slightly looser in writing style, a little swingier" than the *Newsweek* model. "After all, we're writing for the college kid."

That sort of editorial policy never saw the light of documentation, though. "If we don't do a magazine that meets the same standards as *Newsweek*, we're not going to attract readers to *Newsweek*. But defining those standards is a matter of judgment and taste. That means editorial judgment, not editorial paperwork."

Newsweek itself "does different things from what it did years ago," Footlick says. "The magazine has changed with society—to some extent leading society and to some extent following society."

Even over its short editorial history, *On Campus* has evolved, Footlick says; it's expanded its focus on careers and its arts and entertainment coverage. And, he says, it's become "a bigger commercial hit than anyone ever dreamed."

But if *On Campus* is a hit, policy statements, for Footlick, are strike-out material. "As far as I know," he says, "no written policy exists for *Newsweek*. And I'd say it's done quite well for itself." —RJB

tion on the editor's role, for example, he says the editor "has corporate responsibility to and acts for the university" and also "has responsibility to report completely to readers on the issues that concern the university." In another section, he talks about the role of an editorial board as "a source for story ideas and general advice as well as guidance on matters of editorial policy." Leach wrote the statement, had his editorial board review it, and then got approval from the vice president and president.

In her consulting work for Washington College's magazine, Yoe is developing a policy statement that thoroughly defines content. A continuing feature theme, for example, will be the college's home, Maryland's Eastern Shore. Also, to emphasize what Yoe calls the "human-ness" of the publication—and of the college—each issue will have an opening editorial.

Yoe's statement covers editorial responsibility: The editor, who will have ultimate responsibility for content, will be supported by an advisory board whose members will act as advocates for the magazine. The statement even describes editorial tone: The magazine will value substance over fluff and stay away from an administrative orientation. "We'll try to walk the line between a public-relations tone of boosterism and one showing pride in the institution," Yoe says. "In times of crisis, we'll want to adopt not a muckraking tone but a tone of candor."

Although his own policy runs seven pages, Washington University's Noblitt sees no need for all editors to write to such length. He does believe, however, that the policy of writing out policy provides in itself, "the best way to know what to expect from yourself and from your staff."

Noblitt adds that this benefit of writing a statement applies even if the statement never goes beyond the staff. He points out, though, that getting official approval of a policy statement can boost editorial authority by placing the institution's imprimatur on good editorial practices.

"If you're having a lot of trouble about exactly what the purpose should be, and if you're getting different signals from different people, it's best if you get a stamp of approval from the top," Noblitt says.

Public statements of policy can also tell people what material you will—and won't—accept for publication. Four years ago, *Occidental* sought a stamp of approval on a policy for handling faculty news. What emerged was a statement written by the editor and approved by senior administrators. The statement includes guidelines on what sort of news belongs in the magazine's "Faculty Notes," the feature-oriented "Front of the Book," and other sections—even "In Memoriam." A previous editor took that step "to avoid political problems at the outset," says the current editor, Rebecca Rona.

Johns Hopkins Magazine puts out a policy statement defining news. "A new assistant dean is not news," says editor Hancock. "We have definite views about what belongs and what doesn't belong in the magazine. We wouldn't run anything if we did not believe it was going to inform, educate, or entertain, because people would not read it otherwise."

She points out, however, that writing out policy is secondary to creating the policy in the first place: "The value is in thinking about such things; the value isn't in the statement."

Editors don't agree on the value and the wisdom of policy documents. Some editors say that to edit without written policies is to edit in the dark. Others believe the periodical establishes its own identity, and commentaries just muddle the message. But most agree that campus climate, not just editorial preference, is a big factor in making such choices.

As LaSalle of SMU says: "It may be better to have a written policy, because it forces editors to analyze what their intentions are. But because of the circumstances under which we work and the insight of people connected with our program, we've never had to justify or defend ourselves."

Robert J. Bliwise is editor of Duke Magazine, *which received the 1986 and 1989 Sibley Award for Magazine of the Year in the CASE Recognition program and has been ranked in the Top 10 university magazines for each of its seven years of publishing. Duke University is a private institution of 9,700 students in Durham, North Carolina.*

A Fascinating Picture

A journalist's thesis illustrates the current state of affairs for alumni periodicals
by Donna Shoemaker

When dueling with the everyday demons of deadlines, blue-lines, and phone lines, campus editors may not have as much time as they'd like to reflect on issues like these:

- What are the most important goals of an alumni periodical?
- How should a periodical report on a controversial campus issue?
- Whose views should a periodical really reflect?

Nevertheless, editors are eager to learn what their peers think. And they'll also make time to share their own thoughts, as I gratefully discovered while wearing my graduate student cap.

To solicit views on these and other issues, I conducted a 38-question mail survey for my master's thesis in journalism. Although alumni periodicals have been around for a century or so, communications professionals have paid scant attention to them. My goal, in lofty terms, was to expand the knowledge base in the field.

Reaching the proper audience

The thesis, which focused on alumni periodicals' goals, resources, and quality, had its requisite share of hypotheses, Likert scales, and chi-squares. But I wanted to make the findings as useful—and understandable—as possible for CASE profession-

als and other educators.

I sent the survey to a stratified random sample of three groups: 300 campus periodicals editors and 300 alumni professionals (selected from the CASE membership roster), as well as 300 journalism educators (from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication). All 900 were at four-year colleges and universities.

I included alumni professionals because they're often involved with their institution's periodicals and therefore should be aware of the viewpoints of graduates and administrators. And I included journalism educators to provide a reference point both as faculty and as people fairly familiar with outside publishing standards.

Asking the questions

The survey covered broad ground by requesting two types of information:

1. *The facts.* I gathered data on what types of periodicals exist, what characteristics they have in common, and what their primary source of funding is as well as what categories of content they usually publish.

2. *The opinions.* I also asked how the periodical should cover controversy, whose views the periodical should reflect, how it compares with the quality of commercial publications or those from peer institutions, how respondents judge quality, how they would spend money to improve quality, and what an alumni periodical's goals should be.

For a mail survey, the response was gratifying. The overall response rate was 58.3 percent, which I winnowed down to 506 usable questionnaires for the data processing.

After sorting through almost 200 computer printout pages of cross-tabs and other statistical summaries—and quite a few handwritten comments and letters—I found a fascinating picture.

Identifying format and content

First, some of the basic findings.

Magazine was the predominant format (50 percent) that respondents checked off for their institution's primary alumni periodical. Some 34 percent listed a tabloid; 9 percent, a newsletter. For about 6 percent, the format varied.

I asked respondents to rank their college or university in terms of its academic competitiveness (on a three-part scale). Among those who listed their institution as being highly/very competitive, almost three times as many respondents said their institution published a magazine as its primary alumni periodical (66 percent) than a tabloid (23 percent).

Less competitive institutions favored a tabloid (40 percent) over a magazine (31 percent) or a newsletter (20 percent). By contrast, only 4 percent of the highly/very competitive ones published a newsletter, and only 8 percent of competitive institutions did.

To the question about which type of content the periodical devoted the most pages to, the most frequent answer was features (defined as profiles, interviews, essays, and so on). Forty-two percent of all respondents picked that category. News articles about the college or university came in second (24 percent), followed by class notes (16 percent), and alumni association news (5 percent).

However, in looking at type of content in terms of academic ranking, "features" was the most frequent answer for the highly/very competitive institutions (50 percent). This contrasts with 30 percent for less competitive institutions. Less competitive ones were also more likely to have news stories dominate (43 percent) than were the highly/very competitive institutions (17 percent).

Number crunching

Comparing available resources can be tricky because there are so many variables. These include staff size and talents, format and frequency of issues, and source and amount of funding.

To focus in on one facet of budgeting for comparison, I asked about the periodical's estimated annual creative fees paid to nonstaff members (for writing, photography, illustrations, and design).

More than half of the editors (56 percent) indicated that the primary periodical had less than $2,000 a year for such fees, and only 8 percent indicated they had more than $20,000. Magazines had more creative fees available than did newsletters or tabloids; so did the periodicals at highly/very competitive institutions.

What if respondents could take charge of the periodical's budget and receive an increase in funds to improve quality? That hypothetical question provided several viable options for spending.

The choices that drew the most support (by mean scores) were as follows. The first was improving writing (ranked by 66 percent of all respondents—and 71 percent of the editors—as being "very important").

The second was improving graphics/design (ranked by 55 percent of all respondents—and 61 percent of editors—as "very important").

Two options tied for third: conducting readership surveys and increasing frequency/number of pages. (One journalism wag jotted in the survey margin his own suggestion for improving quality: "Hire a higher-quality editor.")

Gauging reader opinion

Let's move on to some of the opinion questions. For example, do editors value their readers' viewpoints? If so, do they conduct readership surveys?

The responses to the first question above showed a high regard for alumni opinion as a way of judging the periodical's quality: 98 percent of respondents overall considered what alumni think of the periodical to be "very important" or "somewhat important."

But to the question about readership surveys, 40 percent of editors said their institution had conducted one. (Only 5 percent surveyed readers once a year; the other 35 percent did so every few years.) Responses from alumni professionals were similar to editors'.

On this subject, apparently, more lip service than opinion research takes place. However, more than one-fourth (28 percent) of the editors said they were considering a readership survey.

Coping with controversy

Another question addressed attitudes on how objectively the periodical should report controversial campus stories that outside media had already covered. This question included a four-part scale and a "no opinion" option.

Among the editors, 57 percent checked off that the periodical should emphasize the institution's official position but also report what other people involved in the controversy think. Twenty-nine percent said the periodical should give equal weight to both sides; 6 percent said it should not cover such issues; and 5 percent said the periodical should report the official position only. Two percent

said they had no opinion.

More alumni professionals (17 percent) than editors or journalism professors said the periodical should give only the institution's official viewpoint. However, 51 percent of alumni administrators said it should emphasize the official position but also report what others think.

Judging quality

One series of questions asked the importance of four given criteria in judging whether an alumni periodical is of high quality.

1. *"What alumni think of it."* Not surprisingly, this was clearly the most vital of the four choices (by mean scores): 81 percent of respondents checked that off as a "very important" criterion, and another 17 percent called it "somewhat important."

2. *"What faculty and staff think of it."* On this criterion, 27 percent checked "very important" and 55 percent said "somewhat important."

3. *"Whether readers support it through voluntary subscriptions."* For this choice, 20 percent said "very important" and 21 percent said "somewhat important."

4. *"Whether it receives awards."* Only 7 percent considered this criterion "very important," although 38 percent said awards were a "somewhat important" criterion in judging quality.

Pinpointing the goals

All editors, at some point, ponder why their institution seeks to reach its graduates through a magazine, tabloid, or newsletter—no matter how humble. Is there a consensus on what these goals are?

Especially in subjective areas like this one, researchers struggle with how best to measure opinions and define terms. Unfortunately, the dictates of data processing lead to asking such questions in a closed-ended way. This series of questions listed some 10 goals and measured respondents' agreement as to their importance, using a five-part scale.

The goal that all three professional groups overwhelmingly chose as most important was "keeping readers informed about the institution." Eighty-six percent considered that goal "very important." Combined with those who checked "somewhat important" (11 percent), that gave a total of 97 percent from all three professional groups.

Two goals tied for second place (in mean scores): "keeping classmates in touch through class notes" and "highlighting the institution's success stories."

Let's look at one of the goals that fell toward the bottom of the list for the three groups of respondents: "focusing on fund-raising news." Some of the greatest tugs-of-war over content in an alumni periodical occur over whether —and how—to include development news, as well as what effect such news has on both givers and nongivers.

Alumni administrators are probably more directly involved in raising funds for their enterprise than are editors. And their responses indicate that they view the periodical more as a means to that end than editors do. Only 6 percent of the editors perceived this goal to be "very important," compared with three times that percentage of alumni professionals (18 percent).

Journalism educators felt even more strongly—24 percent said focusing on fund-raising news was a "very important" goal for a periodical.

Drawing conclusions

The study supported the idea that institutions of higher academic caliber are more likely to publish magazines, to include more substantive content, and to devote more resources to the periodical.

Focus on Alumni Periodicals

Maybe there's no such thing as a typical alumni periodical. Even so, the profiles here offer snapshots of how a magazine, a newsletter, and a tabloid operate.

Snapshot No. 1: *Colby*

At a glance: It's a quarterly magazine that goes to 23,000 alumni, parents, friends, administrators, faculty, and staff of Colby College, located in Waterville, Maine.

Content: Alumni and campus news.

Creative fees: Under $2,000 a year.

Wish list: With a higher budget, *Colby* would hire free-lance writers, photographers, and illustrators.

Primary goal: Says Managing Editor Sally Baker, "We want the magazine to foster links between Colby and its far-flung constituencies by showcasing people and ideas from across these constituencies and by covering campus news."

Snapshot No. 2: Virginia Wesleyan's *Seagull*

At a glance: It's a three-times-yearly newsletter that goes to about 2,900 alumni of Virginia Wesleyan College in Norfolk, Virginia.

Content: Mostly alumni news.

Creative fees: None; one staff person handles *Seagull*'s copy, design, typesetting, and pasteup.

Wish list: With a higher budget, *Seagull* would hire a designer to do the newsletter's layout.

Primary goal: Says Director of Publications Diane E. Hickey Hotaling, "*Seagull* has three equally important goals: to inform alumni about campus developments, to educate them about the increasing value of their diploma, and to involve them in college life."

Snapshot No. 3: University of Toledo's *Alumnus*

At a glance: It's a three-times-yearly tabloid with a varied circulation. One issue goes to about 60,000 alumni, friends, faculty, and prospective students of the University of Toledo in Ohio. The other two go to 15,000 dues-paying alumni and friends.

Content: Campus and alumni news.

Creative fees: Under $2,000 a year.

Wish list: With more money, *Alumnus* would hire free-lance writers.

Primary goal: Says Editor Joe O'Conor, "Our purpose is to stay in touch—to tell alumni about the university and its graduates, what has happened, and what is happening."

But as I see it, no matter what the institution's academic ranking or the publication's budget, frequency, staff, or format, an alumni periodical bears great responsibility indeed.

For graduates who don't come into direct contact with professors or college staff, for those whose only tie to the institution's life is through print, and even for those who do not take an active role in supporting their alma mater, an institution should strive to provide a balanced and fair periodical.

Alumni deserve one that applies hindsight, insight, and foresight to the challenges of academe; that educates, entertains, enlightens, and inspires; and that remains wide open to the fresh air of their views. A periodical that accomplishes all these things becomes, as Yale alumni editor Edwin Oviatt called it some 40 years ago, a window letting out a "beacon light of great purposes."

Donna Shoemaker, editor of the Alumni Magazine Consortium, earned her master's degree in journalism from the University of Maryland College Park in 1988. To order a copy of her 196-page thesis, "Alumni Periodical Goals, Resources, and Quality: A Study of the Perceptions of Campus Editors, Alumni Professionals, and Journalism Educators," send a check or money order for $20 to AMC, 212 Whitehead Hall, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD 21218. The CASE Reference Center also has one copy to loan. For more information, call Manager Susan VanGilder at (202) 328-5942.

The Move to Magazine

If your staff can provide the substance, this format's got all the style you could want, campus editors say
by Patricia Ann LaSalle

For 44 years, Rice University's alumni tabloid, *Sallyport*, enjoyed reader loyalty, campus support, and repeated citations as one of the top alumni tabloids around. "We were happy with the content," says Suzanne Johnson, assistant director for periodicals and editor of *Sallyport*. "But we felt the quality of its format was not consistent with the image we wanted the flagship piece of Rice University to present."

So in September 1987, *Sallyport* abandoned its traditional tabloid format for that of a stylish magazine.

Sallyport's editors aren't alone. More and more college editors are deciding that the medium *is* a large part of the message—and that the magazine medium is the best way to present both the image and the information necessary to promote their institutions.

Can a slick magazine format really help your periodical do its job better? Or does the format's increased expense and effort outweigh any advantages? To find out, we talked to 11 editors who made the move to magazine within the past few years. We asked them why they decided to switch, how they managed the change—and whether they think it was worth the trouble.

Why they changed

In general, there's no question that magazines inhabit the periodical world's upper class. Although tabloids and similar formats are often faster, cheaper, and easier to produce than magazines, the difference that extra time, money, and effort make is precisely what gives magazines their higher status. And in addition to more color, slicker paper, and a more manageable size, magazines enjoy prestige by association: The choicest consumer periodicals come in magazine format.

So it's not surprising that more than half of the editors we spoke to cited "image" as their chief reason for switching to a magazine.

In some cases, the change serves to signal institutional progress. "George Mason has changed greatly over the last eight years," says Helen Ackerman, director of university relations and managing editor of *George Mason Magazine*. "We saw a need to reflect the university's growing quality and sophistication."

Similarly, Executive Editor David Fryxell created *Pitt Magazine* "to better reflect the University of Pittsburgh's growing stature as a major research university of international dimension—and particularly to correct an outdated image of Pitt as a commuter college."

Editors also felt the magazine format would give their periodicals both impact and permanence. "People are less likely to toss out a slick magazine than a newspaper," says Cynthia Stowell, who as editor of Portland State University's *PSU Perspective* tabloid oversaw its change to *PSU Magazine*. (Stowell is now an independent writer.)

"Only a magazine format provides the impact we sought," says Nancy A. Peterson, director of public relations and publications at Macalester College, which turned its tabloid, *MacToday*, into the magazine *Macalester Today*. "A high-quality magazine will be read and saved."

Jay Rochlin, who edits the recently redesigned *Arizona Alumnus* at the University of Arizona, is more blunt: "Magazines at least get glanced at. Tabs don't even make it in the door. When we changed we got several notes from alumni thanking us for *beginning* to send them our publication. These people had been receiving the tabloid for years but didn't even know it."

Several editors note that their magazines also go to important nonalumni constituents—people who may not already be interested in the institution. To capture these readers' attention, the periodicals have to be eye-catching in appearance and substantive in content.

"Our new magazine reflects the fact that the Rutgers 'story,' which we have written about for our alumni since 1914, is increasingly important to the business leaders, public officials, and citizens of our state and region," stated a publisher's note in the first issue of *Rutgers Magazine*. "It is an alumni magazine that reaches beyond its traditional audience—because the research of our faculty, the work of our stu-

dents, and the achievements of our alumni have an impact far beyond the Rutgers family." *Rutgers Magazine*, which replaces two magazines and a tabloid, goes to legislators, parents, donors, and on-campus audiences as well as alumni.

For some periodicals, major campus events prompted the change. Editors at Rutgers, Duke University, and Pitt report that their redesigns were tied to upcoming capital campaigns. Roanoke College and Rice timed their switch in part to herald institutional anniversaries. For Macalester College and Portland State, the switch reflected new presidents—and correspondingly aggressive advancement efforts.

Image wasn't the only motivation for change, however. Some of the editors cite physical advantages specific to magazines. "The magazine format permits stories of depth and substance—stories that reveal the far-ranging intellectual interests and contributions of the university community," says Robert Bliwise, editor of *Duke Magazine*.

The University of Portland had been publishing a "megamagazine" of about 12 by 15 inches in size. "It was cumbersome, had to be folded, and as a result had a short shelf life," says Editor John Soisson. More important, he says, "the large format drove the content to large photos. The university's message is more substantive and word-oriented, and that called for a new format." The result: the 9- by 12-inch *Portland* magazine.

And for three of the institutions—Rutgers, George Mason, and Pitt—the new magazine replaced two or three separate periodicals of various formats. By cutting down on the number of publications, the institutions were able to concentrate their resources on producing a single, high-quality magazine.

Money, effort, and time

Most of the editors said that producing a magazine had been a long-term dream of staff members. In some cases the endorsement of outside consultants helped internal staff to gain institutional support for the change.

In fact, the degree of institutional support at the 11 institutions we surveyed suggests just how highly their administrations value having a magazine. Eight of the institutions cover their magazines' costs entirely.

Pitt pays for 95 percent of its new magazine's costs, and Rutgers pays 90 percent. In both cases, the balance comes from ad revenue. Duke University produces its magazine with 74 percent of funds coming from the institution, 14 percent from voluntary subscriptions, and 12 percent from ads.

The new format meant a bigger budget for all but one of the institutions. Rutgers added $160,000 to the combined budgets of the three discontinued periodicals; much of the new budget pays for mailing to a larger audience. At Duke, the alumni periodical budget tripled. At Macalester, it doubled.

Only the University of Arizona reported no increase in expenses—because its semiannual magazine replaces a quarterly tabloid. "By cutting frequency in half, we saved on postage and applied that to the cost of the new magazine," Rochlin notes. But he adds that he views the decreased frequency as a disadvantage.

Many of the editors say they kept personnel additions to a minimum. Those that combined several publications into one were able to pool staff as well. Others reported shifting responsibilities to free up time for the new magazine's editor. Most agreed that producing a magazine required a full-time editor—but not all of them could get one. And those who did not have an art director added one to the staff or hired a free-lancer.

Planning time for the switch ranged from six to 18 months. A few editors note, though, that they'd already spent a long time thinking about a magazine. "We lobbied for the change for two years," says Barbara Biemeck, publications editor at Roanoke College. "Once we got approval, we had six months for planning."

"Our alumni board had been batting the tabloid-vs.-magazine idea around for more than a year," says *Sallyport* Editor Johnson. "For months we'd been planning an upgrade in the design and paper stock for our tabloid. When the opportunity for a magazine arose, most of the work had already been done, and it was primarily a matter of adapting to a different page size."

That "opportunity," she explains, was the fortunate coincidence of the institution's 75th anniversary, a beefed-up PR effort, a growing campus "renaissance"—and a competitive pitch from a local printer.

"The company was acquiring a top-of-the-line web press," says Johnson. "It was seeking web customers who would showcase its capabilities, so we were able to lock it into a multi-year contract at a terrific price."

In fact, half of the institutions report that the switch meant choosing different printers. A few also upgraded their typesetting capabilities; most were already sending copy electronically to typesetters, whether in-house or off-campus. And *Pitt* added desktop publishing "to compensate for the long lead times of four-color magazine production," says Fryxell.

Style means substance

As important as a magazine's appearance is, it won't work without content that makes the best use of that format. Although the top college and university tabloids often mix features of depth and substance with shorter news items, a sophisticated magazine format *demands* lengthier and more thoughtful articles.

"Too many people don't understand what makes a magazine work," says *Portland*'s Soisson. "They put newsletter or newspaper copy inside a slick cover. A magazine requires its own kind of material to be effective."

All of the 11 editors queried agree with that assessment. Their new magazines, they say, must contain in-depth and issue-oriented features, high-quality writing, substantive reporting, and articles of general interest.

Several editors pointed out that when you adopt the visual cachet of consumer magazines, you also place yourself in competition with them. "Stories must compete with the material found in a general-readership commercial publication," notes Ackerman of George Mason.

In addition to taking a different approach to articles, the editors cited these editorial changes that came with magazine territory:

- *A broader (or simply different) range of contributors.* Some editors are recruiting new authors and photographers from among alumni, faculty, and friends. Others have turned exclusively to staff-written articles as a means to control quality.
- *New or different departments.* Any new format requires rethinking of not only what regular sections fit within the whole but also how they work together. For example, Soisson points out that the old *Portland* mixed campus and alumni news ran-

domly, with long features following. The new structure offers three clearly defined sections—campus news, features, and alumni news—each with a distinct graphic format.

• *Better—and better-selected—graphics.* Editors cite not only improved art and photography but also more effective integration of art and editorial matter.

• *Longer lead time.* Magazine copy must age well. For *Macalester Today's* Peterson, that means including "more think pieces, more alumni profiles and book reviews, less spot news, and no long roundups of last semester's on-campus speakers."

But will it work?

"If 'impression' is part of your reason for publication, a magazine is necessary," states Arizona's Rochlin. "Less information will fit into a magazine, but more will be actually communicated."

His readers' responses bear him out. "Response has been 100 percent positive in both credibility and image. The magazine has raised the alumni association's profile, especially on campus, by several notches. Administrators and faculty read it critically now because it matters. Previously it was assumed that no one bothered to look at the publication anyway."

Rochlin speaks for all the editors we contacted. Every one of them reports favorable initial reaction from alumni, faculty, staff, donors, and legislators, according to every editorial measurement possible.

Peg Major, editor of *Santa Clara Magazine,* has seen a 50 percent increase in letters to the editor. Duke's Bliwise notes "constant growth" in voluntary subscriptions and numerous reprint requests from newspapers, journals, and professional associations. Soisson of Portland believes that the new magazine "has created a more fertile giving climate."

And, as a bonus, many of the magazines have earned CASE Recognition awards. For example, Peterson of Macalester cites her double thrill: the new *Macalester Today* walked away with one gold medal for periodicals improvement—and another for college magazine excellence.

In the second issue of *Roanoke College Magazine,* Biemeck inserted a reply card asking readers which format they preferred and why. Not only were responses enthusiastically in favor of the magazine, but Biemeck heard from long-silent alumni who wanted *their* news in this classy new periodical.

Pitt measured readers' reactions with phone and mail surveys. "In both, more than 90 percent said they prefer the new format," says Fryxell. "Letters to the editor have tripled; 93 percent of the letters expressing opinions are favorable. We've logged requests for more than 5,000 extra copies.

"The magazine has helped recruit faculty and students to our new Honors College and attracted local businesses to a new university support group. It's prompted donations of books to our Center for Latin American Studies, orders for class rings (after we featured one on the cover), dozens of calls from lost alumni who saw a copy and want to get on the mailing list, and even unsolicited gifts to the magazine itself."

But wait, says Fryxell, there's more: "The vice president for university relations and development credits the image of Pitt fostered by the magazine as a key factor in an unprecedented surge in annual giving, which jumped 32 percent in the magazine's first full year of publication."

Making the move

Even considering the difficulties of a change (not the least of which is stress on the editor), these editors agree that the benefits of a magazine format made the move worth it. But they uniformly caution that their success wasn't accidental. Over and over, they point out that their changes worked because they spent the necessary money, effort, and time both in planning and execution. And many cited the importance of both financial and moral support from their institutions.

If you're thinking about a switch, these editors suggest you first consider these points:

• *A magazine requires more time to produce.* Every stage—from planning to production—takes longer. "Don't try to do everything yourself," advises Stowell, former editor of *PSU Magazine.* "As writer, photographer, designer, paste-up artist, and editor, I felt spread a bit thin."

• *A magazine costs more to produce.* "Be as certain and specific as possible about cost projections and the institution's financial commitment," advises Bliwise of Duke. Consider using an out-of-town printer, as Major of Santa Clara does, if you can get a better price. And shop around, says Rice's Johnson. "If the right deal hadn't come along, *Sallyport* would still be a tabloid."

• *A magazine requires careful planning.* "Plan far ahead," says Peterson of Macalester College. "Develop your new format over a year's time, producing and testing one or more prototype issues."

• *A magazine attracts attention.* Make sure you can deliver—and keep delivering—what the format promises. And be ready for the controversy that attention can bring.

"We overlooked the impact our new magazine would have *on* campus," says Macalester's Peterson. "Our first cover showed a recent business graduate wearing a Rolex watch, and some faculty and students complained that we were celebrating material values over intellectual and social ones. We've learned to be more sensitive to unintended messages, and subsequent issues have been *much* better received."

More than anything, the editors add, make sure you've got sound reasons for switching. "Consider your goals," says Biemeck of Roanoke. "Will a magazine serve audiences better? Will it help the college reach its community more effectively? The change has got to make sense for all involved."

And don't change formats just because other institutions are doing so. In fact, whether there's really a trend to switch from tabloids to magazines is still open to question.

Some, like Macalester's Peterson, say yes: "I see fewer tabloids all the time, and I get calls from editors considering the change, so perhaps there is a trend." As Bliwise of Duke points out, "We're all trying to capture the attention of individuals pressed for reading time and accustomed to magazines."

But Rochlin thinks "economics is forcing the opposite"—a movement *back* toward tabloids. Biemeck of Roanoke says she's seen other institutions turning from magazines to simpler formats.

Johnson of Rice University sums up the speculation with a compromise. "We're probably seeing the tail end of a trend. In the '70s, tabloids became the thing to do. In the '80s it has become the magazine.

"Can video be far behind?"

"Why Don't We Have a Magazine?"

The format question has become academic, says one editor
by Marsha Scott Gori

Three years ago, our director of alumni relations asked me to explain to members of the alumni association board why the university produced a tabloid rather than a magazine. I didn't offer them excuses. Instead, I gave them reasons—good reasons, which they could cite when others asked *them* why Bucknell stayed with its tabloid.

Since I made that presentation in 1985—and printed it in *Bucknell World* in the first issue of 1986—some things have changed. To begin with, we've redesigned *Bucknell World*, although we've kept the tabloid format. The most heartening difference, however, is that no one, not even the director of alumni relations, continues to ask why we don't have a magazine.

The first point that comes up in any discussion of magazines and tabloids is, of course, the astronomical difference in cost. Cost certainly is the most important factor to university budget builders, who care first about spending money on educating young people.

But lack of money isn't the reason we at Bucknell don't produce a magazine. We *like* the intimacy of our tabloid. We like the class notes pages filled with colorful details of individual lives (as opposed to terse listings of major alumni milestones). We know that most of our readers already have a well-defined notion of Bucknell; we don't need a slick periodical to enhance that image. We think of *Bucknell World* in the spirit of community journalism, uniting a far-flung community around the world.

My favorite rebuttal in the magazine-vs.-tabloid debate is what I call the Ivy-League-inferiority-complex view of the tabloid. I challenged alumni to peruse their friends' coffee tables for college and university magazines. I assured them they would find beautifully produced CASE award winners from large institutions that maintain big staffs at great expense. But I also told them to look closely for the "poor stepsister" magazines.

"Examples abound of low-quality, poor-looking periodicals, many from good schools," I said. "There's nothing worse than a magazine done cheaply. Two-color covers (or muddy 'scenic' cover photos), poor design, and commercial-looking clip art detract from a magazine's appearance. If you're producing a magazine without good four-color art, you have to ask yourself why you're doing it. Wouldn't a tabloid be better?"

However, since I first set forth my reasons for embracing the tabloid, I've enjoyed what I see as a raising of standards in periodical production. The poor stepsisters are marrying new techniques. For example, desktop publishing is allowing editors more opportunities to be their own designers, especially on formatted pages of class notes or news briefs. Meanwhile, advancing printing technology is offering all of us more choices in production. Since broadsheet dailies began moving from eight- to six-column pages two decades ago, the trend among newspapers and tabloids has been to bigger and bolder—and the discussion of format is becoming academic.

As I look over newsstands and see oversized periodicals like *Rolling Stone* and *Interview* and observe redesigns of magazines like *Esquire*, which went wider and shorter, I've begun to conclude that this tabloid defense may be the last one you'll see. In short, the traditional distinctions of format are losing their meaning. In the next decade, CASE may have to realign its awards categories, grouping publications according to four-color/one-color or large institution/small institution.

At Bucknell, our redesign firmly etched on the minds of our readers the idea that *Bucknell World* is a magazine in tabloid form. Even those who haven't encountered the forthright bias of my convictions have begun to refer to *Bucknell World* as a magazine. We would not be so bold as to enter *Bucknell World* in a CASE magazine competition, but we do feel our redesign has stamped the look of a magazine on our tabloid face.

We print magazine-length stories and essays. We run news briefs in a full-page, top-to-bottom format, as well as features in airy spreads. And we use ads, short features, and photos to break up the grayness of class notes. We have begun to test our printer's mastery of his craft and came off the press in January with our second two-color cover.

We've used our page 1 as a cover (rather than a page of copy) for years. Our redesign eliminated the quarter-fold, and, even though postal workers fold *Bucknell World* to stuff it into mailboxes, the crease isn't permanent. Opened flat, sitting on a coffee table, the tabloid feels more akin to a slick magazine than to a newspaper.

Our goal is to find more free-lance writers, illustrators, and photographers to fill our pages with provocation and delight. Our budget has grown over the years, and what's not eaten up by increases in postage and printing costs has gone to better art and writing.

We're constantly rewarded for our efforts. In addition to one or more tabloid-size pages of letters we print in each issue, we get phone calls and copious notes expressing interest and appreciation. Every now and again, we receive a serendipitous salute from someone who really understands us. "I compliment you on the quality of *Bucknell World*," wrote one alumna. "I frequently compare it with the splashy magazine-format periodical my husband receives from his university. His magazine looks nice and has interesting information, but it is never thought-provoking."

Bucknell World's 42,500 recipients are readers, and the difference encourages and sustains us. We believe we're doing right by our readers. So we'll continue exploring the flexibility of our format and producing what we think of as a hybrid periodical that is just right for Bucknell.

Marsha Scott Gori has served for 10 years as editor of Bucknell World, *a tabloid that goes six times a year to 42,000 alumni, parents, students, faculty, staff, and friends of Bucknell University. In 1991* Bucknell World *shared CASE's Grand Gold Award for tabloid publishing.*

The Fast-paced Alternative

Short lead time and timely content may make a tabloid format the right choice for your institution
by Janis D. Gleason and Lynn Donham

When a shortage of time, money, or staff sends you looking for a periodical that's a workhorse instead of a showhorse, a tabloid may be just the answer.

A tabloid is amazingly versatile for communicating with large audiences frequently and inexpensively. It's practical for printing breaking news for your faculty and staff. And, especially if you splash on a second color to dress it up, it can help you keep in touch with alumni, let volunteers in on the latest about your capital campaign, or communicate with prospective students.

Of course, to make the most of your workhorse, you need to understand what it can and can't do for you. Like all periodicals, a tabloid works best when you match its strengths and limitations to your goals, budget, and staff.

What a tabloid can do

Although both Emory University and Agnes Scott College publish high-quality alumni magazines, we're among the many institutions that use a news-heavy tabloid to supplement the feature-oriented format of a magazine.

For example, every other week during the school year Emory's *Campus Report* goes to 8,000 diverse employees as well as to faculty, trustees, and students. We say "diverse" because Emory employees are spread across a large campus and two hospitals; they range from classics professors to groundskeepers to cardiologists.

Campus Report gives Emory's administration a regular platform from which to reach all employees with vital information. For example, when the university sets new staff policies and procedures, our quick turnaround time allows us to get the same information out to everyone within two weeks at the most.

The turnaround time also helps us compete with the Atlanta media to cover university news as it unfolds and to tell the university's own story. This is possible in part because the Emory administration works with the editor (a member of the news and information staff) to anticipate major news before it breaks to the public.

Tabs vs. magazines

Of course, there are some things a tabloid *can't* do. If you're used to working on a magazine, you need to understand these differences.

1. *A tabloid allows you no time to polish or correct.* As a member of a tabloid staff, you have to get facts, stories, headlines, artwork, and layouts right the first time. Also, unlike magazines, tabloids go directly from the mechanical boards into print; you lack the luxury of spotting and correcting your mistakes on a blueline.

Because of our tight schedules, Emory and Agnes Scott administrators seldom have the chance to approve an article in final form. Instead they rely on frequent communication with the editors and on the editors' judgment.

Of course, if your tabloid is a quarterly for campaign leaders or prospective students, you may not face such tight deadlines. But you will have to move fast to get in the most timely news (and, if you wear many hats, to squeeze this supplementary tab into your already busy schedule).

2. *Flexibility is paramount.* You have to be prepared to shuffle and reorder your story lists constantly. Since priorities can shift with events from day to day, the staff must be able to write to length or to design pages before ever seeing a manuscript.

3. *Design has to make your work simpler, not more complicated.* Standard layouts and standing heads and formats are essential for a tabloid that's quick to produce and easy to read.

4. *Production demands streamlined procedures.* Often this also means juggling several tasks at once.

For example, *Campus Report* usually requires about three days—Monday through Wednesday—for editing, late writing, typesetting, proofreading, and some headline writing. Standard departments such as benefits information, calendar times, and faculty and staff notes get scheduled early in the cycle and laid out first. Later-breaking news pages (usually including page 1) get saved for last. On *very* late stories, the staff writes to fit a hole.

The editor lays out *Campus Report* on Thursday and Friday; obviously we have no time to make position prints or mockups, other than reducing and enlarging artwork and display type on a photocopier. Then a free-lancer pastes up the pages over a weekend.

The paper goes to press on Tuesday at noon. During Tuesday morning "close-outs," as we call them, the editor pores over the mechanicals as if they were bluelines. This stage offers the last chance for checking, since the next time the editor sees *Campus Report*, it's printed.

Two other things help us stay on schedule. By telecommunicating our stories to our off-campus typesetter, we get 24-hour turnaround and few errors in the galleys. In addition, we've trained ourselves so that, when necessary, we can select a photo from the contact sheets and design a page around it before the print arrives.

Content counts

A tabloid won't lie on a coffee table for a month. If readers don't look through it the first time or two they pick it up, it will go unread into the trash or fireplace. That's why you need lively content and frequent issues.

But like all periodicals, your tabloid won't seem to be "must" reading unless you've clarified its purpose and fit its content to that purpose. So think about it. Is your tabloid's goal to inform? encourage gifts? entertain? promote events? provide legal notice of policies? or all of these and more? Decide, and then adapt everything you publish to fit that purpose.

At *Campus Report*, our mission is to inform employees of Emory events or changes that affect them. So we publish major news, some features, profiles of faculty and staff, opinion pieces by professors and visiting scholars, and faculty news. As the campus paper of record, we also publish personnel and benefits information, reports from university-wide panels and commit-

tees, and campus calendars.

As an alumnae tab, *Main Events* features news from the campus and news about higher education as it relates to Agnes Scott or women's education. And we include standard columns from the president, the alumnae association president, and the alumnae director; listings of upcoming events; news stories about alumnae and college leaders; a shopper's guide to Agnes Scott memorabilia; "ads" soliciting alumnae volunteers for projects; fund-raising information, including donor recognition and lists; and faculty notes. We also run *lots* of class notes—20 to 36 pages per issue.

In both *Campus Report* and *Main Events*, we try to pick up on timely national issues that affect higher education—financial aid, tax reform, AIDS—and show how our institutions respond. We also try to provide a historical record for major noninstitutional events. These have included a snowstorm (a rarity in Atlanta!), campus involvement in a pro-integration march in Georgia's all-white Forsyth County, and the stock market decline.

Of course, some of these examples of content could work as well in a magazine as in tabloid. What makes an article right for a tabloid often comes down to length (fairly short), timeliness (as current as possible), and approach (usually straightforward—which is not to say dull). It's the difference between the quick-read approach of your local newspaper's front page and the more leisurely pace of its feature sections.

Writing for a tabloid

Just as tabloids display a distinctive look and focus on certain kinds of subjects, they have a characteristic tone as well. Among the hallmarks of an effectively written tabloid story:

- *A straightforward lead.* Tell readers right off why a topic is important to them.
- *Brevity.* Again, for tabloid editors, that's the key to getting read.
- *Liberal use of quotes.* This brings the story to life and adds the "you are there" element.
- *Easy-to-read style.* We try to be conversational but not folksy.

Again, these traits will probably remind you of newspaper style. However, there is a difference. We publish more analysis and interpretation of how the news affects the institution and our audience than general newspapers do.

Of course, there's more to how a publication "reads" than its text. So we make sure our headlines tell the story accurately. We provide large photos with lively captions; a bold-face lead-in helps photos stand alone or act as a sidebar—a real treat for readers who skim. And we use subheads and read-outs to communicate key points. Chosen carefully, all these devices draw readers in.

What kind of design do you use?

Structured design formats are vital for trouble-free tabloid production.

Standard type sizes for text, headlines, and captions help to speed layout. To make our publications inviting, we publish large photos and minimize trapped white space. *Campus Report* also uses column rules to help organize the page and guide the reader. And our flush-left, ragged-right columns "bounce"—that is, run unevenly—at the bottom of the page. This gives the page more white space and lets us make last-minute text changes without revising the entire page.

After a while, an editor develops a feel for a publication's artwork-to-copy proportions. For example, on *Main Events* we devote roughly 25 percent of each news page to art. Knowing that, we can plan (that is, scrounge around for) artwork as we need it.

When a topic doesn't lend itself to photography, clip art often provides *Main Events* with a take-off point for a visual, though we seldom use it unmodified. Adding type or a screen or using just a portion of a large piece of clip art can yield interesting effects. We like to draw from the Clipper clip art service by Dynamic Graphics.

If you can afford it, a premium grade of newsprint or an even better paper stock will improve the feel and the appearance of your tabloid. Not only will your photos reproduce better, but your type will be easier to read and not so prone to rubbing off on readers' hands.

The essential ingredient: speed

One thing's for sure: With its short lead time and news-oriented content, a tabloid isn't for the slow or sleepy.

When former President Jimmy Carter and Emory's Carter Center held their first Middle East Consultation in 1983, the staffs of *Campus Report* and the news office hustled all week to deal with national and international media working under tight security.

But when the conference ended and the media left, members of the *Campus Report* staff had no time to put their feet up. We still had a four-page special section about the conference to write, edit, design, and get to press two days later. Fortunately, we had the right ingredients to get the job done: a staff experienced at meeting tight deadlines, a speedy web press, and a tabloid format.

Now director of Emory University's News and Information Office, Janis D. Gleason succeeded Lynn Donham in 1985 as editor of Emory's Campus Report. *When this article was published, Lynn Donham was director of publications at Agnes Scott College. She is now a partner at Church Street Design, a design firm in Atlanta, Georgia, specializing in educational publications.*

True to Format

When is a magazine not a magazine? When it's a tabloid, a newsletter, or a creative combination
by Robin Goldman Netherton

You can shout it from the rooftops. You can whisper it through the grapevine. You can write it on the wall, plaster it on a billboard, or trail it from the tail of an airplane.

There are plenty of ways to get your message across. The trick is to find the right one.

For many campus administrators, the method of choice is a periodical. At base, a periodical is a publication that goes to a specified audience at regular intervals. That leaves room for a world of possibilities, ranging from the daily newspaper to the annual almanac.

The type of periodical—that is, the physical format—that's best for you depends on whom you want to reach and how often you want to reach them. And it also depends on what you want to say, how you want to look, and how much you can spend to do it.

Is your format right for your needs? To help you answer that question, CURRENTS asked seven design and editorial experts about your options. The following is a look at the most popular formats for campus periodicals in terms of their characteristic form and content.

Our definitions aren't hard-and-fast; they're archetypes that you can adapt as you see fit. After all, the only way to determine if a format works is to ask whether it does what you want it to do. Your own periodical's format probably varies from the standards we present here. But if you've made good decisions, then you'll be able to identify what special need each variation reflects.

The seven editorial and design consultants who responded to CURRENTS' poll are: Edmund Arnold of Richmond, Virginia; Ann Granning Bennett of Peterson & Co. in Portland, Oregon; Peter Jacobi, professor of journalism at Indiana University; Don Ranly, professor of journalism at the University of Missouri-Columbia; Daniel Reeder of Reeder & Co. in Lawrence, Kansas; Debra Stratton of Stratton Associates in Alexandria, Virginia; and Bernice Thieblot of North Charles Street Design Organization in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Model Magazine

Frequency: Ranges from weekly to semiannual; usually monthly or quarterly.
Paper: High-quality; often gloss white to allow for color printing.
Page size: Typically 9 by 12 inches or smaller; most often 8½ by 11.
Collation: Number of pages can range from 16 to more than 200, but usually between 32 and 96. Cover usually printed separately on heavier stock; occasionally printed as part of text signature but designed separately from text pages.
Binding: Essential; usually staples (saddle-stitch) or glue (perfect).
Color: Ranges from occasional use of spot color to four-color on cover or throughout magazine.
Art: Liberal use of photographs, illustrations, decorative type treatments, and graphic cues.
Grid: Usually two-, three-, or four-column; often varies from article to article or between departmental copy and features. Frequently treats two-page spread as single design unit. Layout often integrates white space for aesthetic purposes. Usually no more than one item or department per spread.
Editorial profile: Offers depth and detail rather then economy or timeliness. Long lead times required for production also permit the research, reporting, and rewriting needed for long, comprehensive articles. Emphasizes permanence over immediacy. Can be more glamorous than any other format, but requires more money and labor to achieve top quality.
Expert opinion: "The word 'magazine' means 'storehouse.' A magazine is a storehouse of information, a storehouse one wants to keep around for a while. Therefore, readers expect superior writing, editing, photography, color, and design." —Don Ranly

The Traditional Tabloid

Frequency: Ranges from daily to quarterly; generally weekly or biweekly for on-campus audiences and monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly for off-campus audiences.
Paper: Often newsprint; sometimes higher-quality uncoated white.
Page size: Half a broadsheet, about 11 by 17 inches.
Collation: Usually between eight and 32 pages. Self-cover; cover typically serves as first text page.
Binding: None.
Color: Usually one- or two-color; four-color in rare cases.
Art: Photos and illustrations.
Grid: Usually four-column and standard throughout issue. Primary design unit is single page. Typically uses formal newspaper layout made up of rectangular elements; occasionally uses "free" magazine-style layout that incorporates white space as a design element. Usually more than one article or section per page.
Editorial profile: The look and feel of a newspaper plus some of the depth and specialization of a magazine. Standardized layout and short lead time allow for timely news coverage. Emphasizes utility and economy over longevity. While commercial tabloids are synonymous with sex and scandal, campus tabloids tend to be newsy and reliable.
Expert opinion: "Tabloids have the special capability of being appropriate for both news and features. This ability makes a tabloid very versatile for publishers who don't have the resources to publish both a magazine and a newsletter." —Debra Stratton

The Newsletter Norm

Frequency: Usually weekly or monthly; sometimes as infrequent as quarterly.
Paper: Wide variation; higher grade than newsprint; often colored.
Page size: Usually 8½ by 11 inches.
Collation: Ranges from single two-sided sheet to 12 pages. Self-cover; cover serves as first text page.
Binding: Optional; if bound, uses staples.
Color: Usually one- or two-color. Sometimes uses pre-printed color masthead or graphic signature (such as horizon rule or border).
Art: Often limited to line art or typographic cues. Sometimes photos.
Grid: If typewritten, usually one- or two-column. If typeset, ranges from two- to four-column. Grid usually standard throughout issue, but often features one or more unusual characteristics—such as a disproportionate margin—to distinguish it visually from other newsletters. Primary design unit is single page. Typically uses formal layout made up of rectangles. Usually more than one article or section on a page.
Editorial profile: Fast, inexpensive way to get timely news to a specific, well-defined audience. Items are brief and often dated. Writing is concise and informal, sometimes even telegraphic. Emphasizes information rather than presentation.
Expert opinion: "The essence of a *new*sletter is *new's*. You can run long features, but ideally I'd keep stories short and simple. Newsletters fit well into contemporary living because they present news in brief and can communicate an institutional message in an attractive format tailored specifically to the audience and image." —Ann Granning Bennett

The Original Alternative

"What on earth is a 'magaletter'?" asks designer Thieblot. "A fat newsletter? Or a cheap magazine? Do we need this word in our vocabulary?"

Apparently we do—but it's anyone's guess just what it means. Thanks to technological advances that make almost any printed format possible (if not practical), editors are now limited only by their imagination, skill, and budgets. And as they seek to break old barriers or reach new audiences, they're creating new forms of periodicals that defy traditional classification.

The most obvious variation, as Arnold notes, "is a tabloid newspaper that uses many—perhaps all—'free' pages, those that have large areas of white space."

What to call the new breed of tabs, which echo the magazine's traditional characteristics as well as the newspaper's, is still up for debate. While some experts, like Reeder, simply see them as "the better tabloids," others assign them hybrid names.

"I like the 'magapaper,' though some may gag at the name," says Ranly. "The magapaper has better quality paper than the tabloid but is the same size. It has room for the type to be larger, the white space to be larger, the pictures to be larger." This, he adds, "encourages enticing blurbs, informative captions, boxes, and sidebars."

Arnold uses the term "magtab" to refer to the tabloid that uses a quarter-fold to produce a "magazinish cover taking up half a tab page."

Then there's the "magaletter," a newsletter that adopts such magazine properties as color photos, white space, or designs that work over two-page spreads. These "mini-magazines" often feature magazine-length articles and might run 16 pages or even larger.

Still, several of the experts warn that the expense and time it takes to produce a beefed-up newsletter may cancel out the economy and timeliness that made a newsletter format desirable in the first place. And, they add, a magaletter editor needs the design and editing skills of a magazine editor. "We see a lot of newsletters masquerading as magazines," says Thieblot. "Fancy dress does not a magazine make."

Format variations go beyond cross-breeds of the Big Three. "There are audio- and videotape magazines," notes Jacobi. "There are hard-cover-like-books magazines."

In the end, the experts say, it's not physical characteristics that define periodicals. It's "how they do what they do," says Jacobi.

"Editors should consider their audience, know their subject, and design a publication that best delivers the message," states Ranly. "What one calls it is not important at all."

Robin Goldman Netherton, now assistant manager of the GAO Journal *at the U.S. General Accounting Office in Washington, DC, was associate editor of CURRENTS when she wrote this article.*

Magamorphosis

How a make-over added substance—and glamour—to SMU's quarterly alumni magazine
by Patricia Ann LaSalle

Southern Methodist University has been enjoying an academic renaissance. But until recently, its alumni magazine was still in the dark ages.

Tougher admission standards, merit scholarships, and curriculum refinements have drawn high-quality students to the university. Average freshman SAT scores have increased 80 points in the last five years. And new endowed chairs are strengthening an already outstanding faculty.

But meanwhile, the *Mustang*, without the attention of a full-time editor, failed to keep pace with the new activity on campus. The quarterly magazine lacked strong features that interpreted current student life, showcased faculty expertise, or linked campus research to contemporary issues. Instead, it made do with a dull, disjointed collection of

rambling departments that put disproportionate emphasis on sports and alumni events. And all this was packaged in a colorless, outdated design.

Our conclusion: We needed to breathe new life into the magazine to reflect the new academic spirit animating the campus. The process: Follow a careful plan of action, based on reason and research, to transform the magazine editorially and graphically.

Here's what we did—and what we learned along the way.

Content first

We realized that establishing a stronger design wouldn't camouflage weak content, so we focused first on editorial changes. We based our efforts on the following principles.

• *Start at the top.* An alumni magazine is only as good as the institution's leadership encourages it to be—by committing resources and recognizing the importance of effective communication with alumni.

In 1983, when I applied for the job of director of alumni publications in SMU's Office of Alumni Relations, I presented the content changes I thought the magazine needed. In turn, I got up-front agreement from the director of alumni relations (my boss) and the vice president for development and alumni relations. I learned, too, that SMU's president also believed the magazine needed a new direction. No additional funds were available at that time, but I knew I had the ability —and the support—to make a few improvements.

• *Be reasonable.* Determine *why* you need a change. That's the only way to support your case for additional resources when the time comes to ask for them.

In our case, the reasons were clear: The *Mustang* was the only publication that goes to all 66,000 alumni. Forty percent of them live in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and many are corporate and community leaders. They're busy people, so we need a magazine that captures their attention.

Similarly, as we ask alumni for financial support and for help in recruiting students, it's crucial that they understand the academic changes under way at SMU, take pride in them, and be able to talk about what the university is like *today*. Content that dwells mostly on old glories on the athletic field will not produce new victories in the academic arena.

We also had a compelling philosophical reason for change: The content of an alumni periodical should reflect the "content" of the institution by putting all areas of campus life into balance. This means, of course, reporting problems along with plaudits.

• *Research the past.* To define precisely where a magazine should go, you must determine first where it's been. We conducted a content analysis of the magazine from 1980 to 1983. In this study, we measured the amount of space devoted to such areas as academics, alumni news, and sports.

The results confirmed our initial observation that the magazine was heavy on short news items about sports and alumni events but light on features covering academic life. This represented not only the wrong approach to communicating the SMU of today but also an inefficient use of the magazine format. Brief items would be better suited to a newsletter.

• *Set objectives.* Based on our analysis, we devised written content goals and determined what types of articles would help us meet them.

For example, we set a goal "to help alumni understand and identify with current students and faculty." Our method: Articles on various aspects of student life and faculty achievements. To achieve a goal "to help alumni view SMU as a source of continued learning in their lives," we decided to use articles on contemporary issues drawing upon faculty expertise or using professors as authors.

These goals and solutions may sound simplistic, but they have proved useful in plotting the magazine's direction and making certain it stays on the right track.

• *Know thy campus.* To come up with article ideas to meet our content objectives, the associate editor and I had to educate ourselves about the educators. What research was under way? What areas of expertise translated into interesting articles?

We've become avid readers of campus calendars so we can find out which professors are speaking on what topics. We attend lectures to assess possible authors and article ideas. We study the news bureau's "experts list." We meet with deans, department chairs, and external affairs officers of each college within the university. I also attend news bureau staff meetings to stay on top of campus issues.

• *Be an opportunist.* Use any opportunity to conduct reader research. When SMU's Office of University Relations decided to conduct a nationwide survey of alumni attitudes toward SMU, we jumped at the chance to submit questions about the alumni magazine.

The survey found that loyal alumni tend to be those who, as students, enjoyed good relationships with faculty. This supported our new emphasis on articles that highlighted faculty. Readers also said they wanted to know more about academic life. In general, the results confirmed that we were moving in the right direction.

• *Reach out for contributions.* Increasing feature content expands the need for writers, but you don't necessarily have to increase your staff or hire free-lance writers (we didn't have the money to do either). Still, the associate editor and I can't do it all ourselves. In addition to writing most of the copy for the magazine, we also supervise other alumni publications.

So we took advantage of the cooperative professionals on the news bureau staff of the Office of University Relations. These people now contribute news items and occasional features. Even though their office is in a different university division from the Office of Alumni Relations, they and their vice president share our vision for the alumni magazine and are eager to be a part of it.

Form follows function

Although our first priority was to improve content, we wanted to increase the graphic quality of the magazine to match. Here's what we learned about building visually on content changes.

• *Take small steps.* Many editors must do double duty as designers, and I was no exception. But even if you have no funds for a designer or a graphic overhaul, you can usually find small, inexpensive ways to improve your magazine's appearance.

Originally, feature articles appeared randomly throughout the magazine, and the position of departments changed with each issue. Since we wanted to show off our new stories, we placed them together in one section, both to attract more attention and to use them as the magazine's focal point. We also anchored departments to specific positions in the magazine. In addition, we increased

the size of headlines and photographs. This may have been a small start, but but we were paving the way for something big.

• *Take risks.* Once we had nods of approval from readers on the new content focus, we decided to gamble with graphics. With only $1,000 in our budget for "outside services," we hired a free-lance designer for one issue to give the feature section more punch. Our rationale: By showing what a difference professional design makes, we could win support for permanent design help.

Our risk worked. We got the go-ahead to hire the designer for two more issues. Then, the vice president for development and alumni relations and the vice president for university relations—who understood all along the importance of good design—agreed to share the cost of a full-time university designer to work on the magazine and other SMU publications.

Look carefully when hiring a designer. Make sure you know each candidate's strengths. As part of the search committee, I made certain we considered only designers who had a flair for magazines. (Not all of them do.)

• *Be an entrepreneur.* Don't expect a new design to emerge overnight, but do look for ways to make gradual improvements. We still had the magazine's outmoded format to work with, but our new designer added his touch right away in the features section of the Fall 1984 issue. His changes included bigger and bolder photographs, sidebars to break up long articles, pulled quotes, and screens.

To make an even bigger splash, we found a way to finance color on the inside of the magazine. We sold a four-page, full-color ad to the campus bookstore in the back of the magazine for an amount that would underwrite the addition of color in the features section at the front of the book. This, too, set the stage for more dramatic changes to come.

Don't stop now

Armed with readers' oohs and ahs over the colorful features section in the Fall 1984 issue, we made our big move: a proposal to give the magazine a completely new look.

We already had the support of the director of alumni relations and the two advancement vice presidents. The designer and I met several times to decide on the appropriate tone: lively, yet classic and traditional. While I put together a written rationale and cost estimates, he worked on the new graphic design and prepared comprehensive boards.

We made a formal presentation to the university president and asked for funds to help finance the upgrade. The answer was yes. But the overriding principle of that affirmation was: Without first proving itself by improving its content, the magazine would not have gained the popularity and credibility to warrant a new design.

The graphic redesign included:

• a new size—8½ by 11¼, instead of the old 8¼ by 11 (this may seem like a small change, but we wanted to stand out at least a little from other magazines, and this was the largest size our printer could accommodate);

• Century Old Style type—a classic serif face—instead of the original sans serif Helvetica;

• an expanded name—*SMU Mustang*—to link the magazine with the institution, and a new masthead with a dominant "SMU" to emphasize the institution rather than just its mascot;

• better paper: 60-pound stock for text pages instead of the old 45-pound, and a 100-pound cover stock instead of the original 60-pound;

• better photographs (with stronger content as well as quality) and illustrations; and

• color for some features.

Besides these content changes I noted earlier, we made a few other editorial improvements. We began editing department copy more tightly to improve its quality and allow more space for features. And we added a department called "Decade Ahead Update" to report on fund raising.

The transformation took two years—but it was worth the wait. As the university's only magazine, the 48-page *SMU Mustang* presents features along with campus and alumni news to meet a variety of reader interests. The university now sends the magazine to parents of current students, corporate leaders, and the most sought-after prospective students. In the past year, the magazine has won more than 10 regional and national awards. That included three awards in the 1985 CASE Recognition program: gold medals both in university magazine publishing and in periodical publishing improvement, and a silver medal for excellence in writing.

More rewarding, however, is the feedback from readers. Alumni, faculty, administrators, and students talk and write about the magazine, and they especially notice the content. In response to the Winter 1985 issue—the first with the new design—one alumnus wrote, "The graphics were superb but, more important, the content was of such high caliber that I had to write and commend the results."

SMU Mustang has become what we hoped it would be: a forum for the exchange of ideas and a foundation on which to build for the future. That is, after all, the central mission of a university. A university magazine should be no less.

Patricia Ann LaSalle is director of periodicals and editor of SMU Magazine *at Southern Methodist University. In 1985 she led a major content and graphic overhaul of the magazine, which has since won more than 65 national and regional awards for excellence, including Top Ten Magazine award from CASE in 1991. SMU is a private institution of 8,800 students in Dallas, Texas.*

Magazine Miracles

Advice on excellence for underfunded, understaffed campus editors
by Catherine L. O'Shea

Small-shop campus editors remind me of the princess in *Rumpelstiltskin*. Working with rudimentary equipment and invisible staff, you're nonetheless expected to spin straw into journalistic gold. Clearly you need some magic to excel, but where can you turn to get it?

Facing just this dilemma a few years ago, I applied the principles I'd learned as an assistant department head at *Life* magazine to my new responsibilities as Elizabethtown College editor. Within a year, the International Association of Business Communicators had named our *Elizabethtown Magazine* the best in its regional Spectrum Awards program.

I suddenly realized, you see, that *Life* founder Henry Luce's success had little to do with budget or staffing. From the start, Luce planned thoroughly and deployed resources effectively. His comprehensive system streamlined many decisions that less experienced editors agonize over month by month. *Life*'s editors were then free to approach each issue with the enthusiasm and imagination that hook, and keep, thoughtful readers.

Such editorial savvy is not unique. Most successful commercial and trade publications and many award-winning small-shop editors follow similar guidelines. With CASE's help, I recently surveyed nine top institutional editors. All of them work with limited staff and budget and produce CASE-award-winning publications—some for less than 60 cents a copy. Here are their thoughts on successfully adapting and applying key tricks of the trade.

Planning: You're the publisher, too

Behind—and ahead of—every great magazine is a plan. It's true that without a publisher to prod them, few institutional editors feel much pressure to plan further ahead than a month or a semester. But living issue to issue is a big mistake. Here are basic steps you can take to position your publication for success.

• *Make a formal editorial calendar.* Organize into a written plan all the topics and ideas you need to cover for the next year. Set aside time specifically for this task.

This long-term planning can show you your "vacuums, prejudices, and imbalances," as Editor Leona Griffin at *Vermont Quarterly* puts it. Writing down ideas for the future helps her select "stories of national and international implication that find both root and wing on campus." At Rice University, *Sallyport* Editor Suzanne Johnson says, "I plan around a four- to five-issue 'skeleton' that lists features by type: campus issue, alumni profile, faculty research, university history."

Most editors I queried have established editorial advisory boards to offer opinions on the magazine's direction and topics for coverage. These varied combinations of faculty, alumni, and administrators meet with the editorial staff three or four times a year.

Advisory boards range widely in size. I usually work with five- to seven-member boards; Rice's board has 20. The editors I contacted usually encourage their members to suggest people and topics for future issues, but all the editors are firm on one point: An advisory board's role is, as *Emory Magazine* Editor Andrew Beierle puts it, "just that—advisory." To retain editorial integrity, you must keep the final say for yourself.

As for content analysis and projection, six days per year may be all you need—one day with your advisory board each quarter and two for long-term planning in the summer. In these six days you can narrow your list of prospective stories to those that will do the best job of involving your audience and showcasing your institution's relevance to scientific, social, and political issues already on readers' minds.

• *Focus on topics important to your readers.* Skilled editors reach beyond their personal interests to set editorial agendas. Find out what your readers want and need, and then offer it.

To make sure you consider all the major topics of interest, take a tip from Editor Ann D'Amico Rago of the *Duquesne University Record*. She's adopted a newspaper-style "beat system" to encourage fair coverage of each of the university's eight schools.

Then supplement those beats with ideas from all over. Like her commercial counterparts, *Washington College Magazine* Editor Meredith Davies solicits comments and suggestions from 200 randomly selected readers after each quarterly issue. Johnson at Rice mails a survey every five years to about 10 percent of *Sallyport*'s readers.

Johnson's survey (which includes return postage) asks readers to grade her latest issue on everything from story selection to writing to graphics. It also gauges interest in particular topics and asks for general suggestions. "This survey helps us plan direction for the magazine," she explains.

Many editors I spoke with get story ideas from members of their advisory board. Others take a different tack—they work with alumni office staff to generate reader comments at alumni gatherings. Johnson gathers readers' opinions during homecoming and also meets after each issue with the Rice alumni association publications committee. Because the committee changes yearly, Johnson has "a large number of alumni contacts who feel comfortable calling me up with ideas."

Reaching out in these ways will assure some reader-preference feedback. Using it in long-term planning will help guarantee that your limited staff will cover a wide range of issues and personalities.

• *Make a point of keeping readers' trust and loyalty.* One of the greatest hurdles institutional editors face is the widespread belief that they're merely shills for their institution. However, you can and should take steps to increase your magazine's credibility.

Some editors, like Katherine Hinds at the Lawrenceville School, have developed informal understandings with higher-ups that " 'telling it like it is' is how a publication—and therefore the

administration—gains credibility." Other institutions, like Rice and Washington College, possess written guidelines saying that the magazine will not dodge controversy.

In working with top administrators, you'd be wise to develop (in writing, if possible) a clear-cut understanding that you'll never be asked to distort or disguise "bad news." That agreement may help save your integrity in a crisis.

• *Spread the excellence.* Show off your work. None of the schools and colleges I contacted still views its periodical as merely an "alumni magazine." You can reach appropriate opinion leaders—and expand your mission—if you review your mailing list annually to make sure it includes everyone whose good will you need.

As Editor Sara White sees it, the role of her *Concord Academy* magazine is to "educate alumni and friends about the school by including articles about people in the community, recent campus developments, and class notes and other alumni news." She distributes the magazine to grandparents, independent counselors, other members of the National Association of Independent Schools, potential students, and past faculty as well as the usual mix of parents, donors, faculty, staff, and friends.

At California Institute of Technology, *Engineering and Science* magazine goes to science media, high schools, government and community leaders, and libraries. According to Editor Jane Dietrich, the magazine's purpose is to portray Caltech as a place of scientific creativity to an audience beyond the campus and alumni.

Money: Doing more with less

It's no secret that most of our publications are chronically understaffed. So are most commercial magazines. How, then, do so many routinely produce inviting design, exciting illustration, and tightly edited copy?

First, they invest in the most advanced technology they can afford, which cuts expensive staff involvement in routine tasks. Second, they use part-timers (contributing editors) and outside experts (consulting editors/designers) to provide a bit of professional panache. Third, they follow stylebooks and style sheets to produce accurate, consistent drafts and eliminate costly rewrites. The award winners I spoke to offer this advice.

• *Let the computer do it.* Even three years ago, it was extremely difficult to convince some managers to invest in computer equipment for the publications office. But now, evidence of computers' cost-saving capabilities is overwhelming even the most reluctant.

"When we started sending our typesetting out over a modem, we cut these costs in half," says Jane Dietrich at Caltech. "Then, when we began doing typesetting on campus, we cut our costs to one-tenth. With the money we saved, we started doing four-color, which has had a big impact."

At Washington College, says Davies, "the advent of desktop publishing allowed us to make the switch from a cheap-looking tabloid to an attractive magazine format without any additional expenditure." Citing their capabilities in writing, editing, proofing, and design, editors I spoke with strongly recommend a combination of Macintosh, Microsoft Word, and PageMaker for the small editing shop.

• *Buy the art and design expertise you need—no more, no less.* You may be able to have your publication redesigned for "free" by tying into an institutionally funded campus identity program. If not, our experts advise, you should still be careful to have your design, as Duquesne's Rago notes, "depict the tradition" or institutional point of view.

Only two of the award winners I chose have routine in-house design help. Most used an outside firm to develop an initial design grid (often established on computer) that they now follow themselves, with help from free-lance designers as needed.

• *Consider* everyone *a part of your writing staff.* Like commercial magazines, our award winners use a mixture of staff-written material and bylined features or guest columns. Faculty, administrators, student interns, alumni, media relations staff, news releases, and even reprints are all viable sources of good magazine material.

Tapping these sources gives you diversity and added interest. That's why Griffin values varying editorial rhythms at *Vermont Quarterly;* she represents "as many voices as possible in each issue." Check your class notes; talk again to faculty, alumni, students, and your advisory board. "Hang out with the grounds crew," suggests Hinds at Lawrenceville. "Consider all facets of the institution, editorially and visually."

Faculty material can also add credibility, explains Beierle of *Emory Magazine:* "Faculty are *passionate* about their work. If you can tap into their fascination, you can probably convey that to the reader." Better yet, have them convey it. "We rarely write *about* faculty work," says Dan Schillaci, director of publications at Bard College. "We prefer original scholarship, criticism, and stories. These make the magazine more interesting and give faculty a dignified role in promoting the institution."

Occasional reprints also offer classy material and an "outside" perspective. I filled a huge hole in my first issue of *Elizabethtown* with a superb profile of an alumnus, a Johns Hopkins chaplain, that had appeared in *Johns Hopkins* magazine. The reprint was free—in fact, I don't know of any instance where a school, college, or corporate publication has charged for the use of an article.

The magic touch

Let's be frank. You can plan effectively, deploy your resources shrewdly, and still wind up with nothing more than an efficiently produced lackluster publication. How, then, can you use your newfound free time to create a magazine shimmering with creative magic?

First, our experts agree, you should read—a lot. Look at how other magazines approach topics and what makes the treatment interesting, Johnson suggests. Then take each topic you plan to cover and "make a game of it—see how many different ways you can think of to approach it." When you select your best approach, she adds, "write visually. Write a magazine *spread*" by imagining the most effective headline, lead, and art for each story.

For cost-effective creativity, look for unusual, free illustrations. Government, corporate, and association public relations officers are usually delighted to provide excellent photographs for only a credit. Much fine illustration is in the public domain and available from specialty publishers as clip art. Profile subjects can often provide quality art, as can your art department or library. Caltech's Dietrich taps the specialized resources of a science-oriented campus, such as computer graphics, for her elegant magazine.

Whatever you do, these editors urge, *don't* skimp on your photo budget. Use photographers and paper that

guarantee exciting, evocative pictures.

Pay particular attention to your covers. The front cover must give readers a vibrant image that piques their curiosity. The back cover can highlight special articles, upcoming events, or great news.

Once your covers have hooked readers, continue to surprise them when they look inside. Offer them stability, as Johnson suggests, with a *Time*-magazine-style departmental organization. But then you should vary the length, tone and perspective of your material. Banish all grip-and-grin photos. Cover routine campus events from an unusual perspective.

Study the field; ask your designer to share professional publications with you. Take advantage of opportunities; for instance, have your layout critiqued at a CASE conference. Or, as Davies recommends, invite a graduate who's a PR or journalism professional to serve as an "editorial consultant" to help keep you in touch with current professional standards.

Above all, remember: Great magazines are built one story at a time. If you're not yet sure how far you can stretch, says Schillaci at Bard, "start by doing a piece on a modest scale—but make it the very best, most original little piece you can do." You'll find that there's magic in work like that. When you finish it and everything comes together, it will be pure gold—and you and your readers will know it.

With more than 15 years of experience, Catherine L. O'Shea has created or helped redirect publications for universities, small colleges, and independent schools. She now divides her time between institutional consulting and free-lance writing.

Quality: The Proof's in the Pages

Nothing undercuts reader confidence like typos and grammatical errors. You can attack these errors at both ends of your production process.

Accuracy begins with a stylebook and a good reference shelf. On that shelf, keep a thesaurus and an up-to-date dictionary. Supplement them with such guides as Trimble's *Writing with Style*, Fowler's *Little, Brown Handbook*, and Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*.

Most editors I talked to use the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Along with Editor Suzanne Johnson at Rice University, though, I prefer the *Associated Press Stylebook*. As she notes, because most newspapers use it, it's the style general-audience readers "are most accustomed to reading."

Not even computer spell-checking programs have yet eliminated the need for expert proofing. You can reduce errors by following these three simple rules:

1. Never do the final check on anything you've written yourself.
2. Have two people read everything—one for spelling and grammar and one for style and sense.
3. Adopt the old *Life* trick of reading each page *backward*. It's the most effective way to spot misspellings and wrong words.—CLO

Two for the Price of One

Slipping an extra publication into your regular periodical can double your savings—or your work
by Donna Shoemaker

"Two-fers" can be tempting. Saddle-stitch an honor roll, commemorative program, or newsletter into your alumni magazine, and readers receive two publications in one. Meanwhile, your institution trims the expenses of production and mailing.

But are mere staples tough enough to hold two different messages together? Are such twinned publications really double trouble in disguise? There's no single answer to the two-fer question, but CASE professionals offer some lively opinions.

Bound for glory

We're using the term "two-fer" here to describe a stand-alone publication bound into a periodical that regularly goes to a given institutional audience. The insert might be a four-page sheet (for example, a campaign newsletter) or many pages (such as an honor roll of donors). It might be a one-time feature (say, an inaugural memory book) or an annual one (such as a reunion announcement package). Ideally, the insert is meant for largely the same audience that already gets the periodical—which makes the match a logical way to simplify distribution.

A true two-fer differs from a special section in that the inserted publication is designed to work independently. It may have a distinct look—for example, a smaller trim size or a different paper stock. If it's a newsletter, it might have its own nameplate, issue number, and staff box. It frequently originates in another office or department. Often the insert can also be printed as a separate piece with little modification.

In practice, however, editors stretch the concept of a two-fer to apply to a variety of situations. For example, an editor might package a regular editorial section so that it *looks* like a separately bound-in publication. Or a periodical might combine pages of a separately developed report directly into its own editorial format.

For some editors, pairing publications has several obvious advantages. For example:

- *It saves money.* "People are looking more critically at expenditures like

magazines," says Phil Terranova, assistant vice president for public relations at Drexel University. Terranova bound a copy of the president's annual report in the winter 1987 debut issue of *Drexel* magazine.

"The previous annual report was a discrete document that looked, and was, very costly," he says—and that led to grumbling among the faculty. By wrapping a more modest report into the magazine, the institution cut down on both postage and production costs, and the publications garnered a better reception on campus.

• *It eases mailbox bloat.* "We have a concern at times that we are sending people too much mail. Are we wearing them down?" asks Richard Morrison, director of public affairs at Lawrence University. By including a four-page capital campaign newsletter in the quarterly *Lawrence Today*, the university can combine its development news with its showcase piece.

The insert, which was also mailed separately to a few donors who didn't already get the magazine, sports its own nameplate and features a different graphic style and paper stock. "Should readers choose to remove it, they can," says Editor Anne Atwood Mead.

• *It provides a service.* Columbia University had not produced a viewbook in nearly 50 years. So when the university called on the *Columbia* magazine staff to put together a 40-page booklet describing the university for prospective students, donors, and other audiences, the editors thought alumni might be interested as well. For the April 1985 issue of *Columbia*, the staff tucked the magazine's usual departments and ads into a 24-page signature and wrapped that around the viewbook. The cover was the same as the viewbook's, too, with the magazine's masthead added.

The solution not only made the most of the staff's limited time, but it "served the institution well and was a keepsake for our readers," says Editor Meg Dooley. And alumni appreciated the update.

Bound for trouble

For all the advantages of the combination concept, other editors raise strong arguments against it. For instance:

• *It detracts from the impact of both the periodical and the publication.* Despite the cost savings, Drexel's Terranova still has misgivings about pairing an annual report with his new magazine. "I'm not convinced that piggy-backing is really effective," he says. "One wonders if somehow it doesn't diminish the importance of the magazine *and* the president's annual report. Editorially, from a very idealistic level, I don't think the two mix."

Kim Robert Nilsen, editor of the Northfield Mount Hermon School's *News*, believes that pairings too often reflect an institution's misunderstanding of its own marketing tools. Administrators "want the publications to do too many things, and therefore they don't do anything well," he says. "In the case of the *News*, I want it to be a consumer magazine and be read cover to cover, not just chucked out." Carrying anything but the magazine's usual blend of news, editorials, features, and class notes "would defeat the purpose," he explains.

• *It may not carry out its purpose.* Just because a periodical is delivered to alumni homes doesn't guarantee that graduates will read it. The plan to call attention to an insert by attaching it to an alumni magazine can backfire if readers aren't interested in the vehicle. If they don't open the magazine, they'll never notice the insert.

Lawrence's Morrison likes the idea of two-fers. But he knows that in some cases, bottom-line results argue against the concept. Lawrence has distributed brochures of university merchandise both through direct mail and as an insert in the magazine. "There's no question that the rate of return from a separate mailer is a full 60 percent higher," he says, even when the magazine insert and the mailing are the same in form and content. So Lawrence is considering other ways to trim production expenses to make up for the costs of mailing the brochure separately.

• *It confuses the reader.* Administrators are usually the ones who see this mixed marriage as an attractive alternative, says Laura Freid, editor of *Bostonia* and assistant vice president for university relations at Boston University. "When an insert comes in the middle of an article or the magazine, the reader doesn't understand why it's in there," she says. "I would suggest a better alternative is to mail the development material along with the periodical in a polybag."

Still, the biggest source of disagreement over the two-fer concept lies in the fact that many such inserts are development-related. Some periodical editors don't mind having an insert devoted to fund-raising material because that usually means they don't have to use their own pages to report on the same matters. And, some say, such a mix has its own merits.

For example, consider the premise that an honor roll enables donors to feel more of a part of your educational community. "In that context, I would come down on the side that it should be part of a magazine or the president's annual report, for it lists the achievements as well as the people who made them possible," says David C. Twining, director of alumni affairs at Western Reserve College (one of two undergraduate colleges of Case Western Reserve University).

Twining featured an honor roll prominently in the fall 1987 issue of *Reserve*, the quarterly magazine he edits. He believes that placement in such a periodical increases the readership of development news: "If it's part of the magazine or president's report, people read all of it." And, he adds, binding the messages together means readers can't simply toss one away.

But even though he was pleased with the two-fer in 1987, Twining printed the magazine and report separately in 1988. This was mainly because of timing problems, but it also avoided sacrificing editorial space in the magazine.

Other editors, however, would rather keep campaign reports, honor rolls, and gift requests from ever invading any part of their editorial domain. They argue that such a pairing makes it look like the institution's main reason for communicating to alumni is to raise money.

Publications built for two

What publications were born to be paired? Look for logical combos that share an intended audience and complementary themes. And consider whether a majority of the magazine's readers will really want to see the insert, too.

Although some inserts are editorial like the magazine itself, they still reflect a separate source of information. *Indiana Alumni*, which goes to all members of the Indiana University Alumni Association, serves its six regional campuses with a special bind-in twice a year. In those issues, the alumni

directors at the smaller campuses prepare copy for four-page, newsletter-style "wraparounds" that nestle between the cover and the body of the magazine. Alumni of regional campuses can then enjoy an IU magazine that contains a supplement from their own campus.

Indiana Alumni does other sorts of two-fers as well. It has placed the campaign newsletter, the university president's annual report to alumni, the university's academic agenda, and the alumni association's annual report in the center position. All the inserted publications can stand alone, thanks to their mastheads, paper stock, and independent page numbering.

Editor Judith Schroeder points out, however, that putting an editorial insert in the center prevents her from accepting an advertising insert for that choice spot.

Other pairings that worked:

• In fall 1988, Worcester Polytechnic Institute's *WPI Journal* carried the college's annual financial report as an eight-page insert plus a cover on heavier paper. Although a striking design (featuring marbleized paper) gave the report a stand-alone look, several design elements it picked up from the magazine gave the entire publication a unified appearance.

Editor Michael Dorsey notes that the two-fer made it possible to eliminate a "fairly expensive piece" while expanding the report's audience to alumni. The 1,000 extra copies of the report he had printed are useful for slipping in with foundation proposals or filling media requests.

• *Harvard Magazine*'s May-June 1986 issue carried an 18-page supplement on the university's 350th anniversary. The supplement featured a schedule of events and information on ordering tickets. The insert fell in the middle of an article titled "How Harvard Celebrates."

• *F&M Today*, the former magazine of Franklin and Marshall College, included a six-page, full-color, fold-out section with a timeline showing 200 years of the college's history. In other issues, the quarterly bound in inserts about F&M's hometown of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and about conserving the college's art collection. The college printed and distributed plenty of separate copies of both features.

• Hillsdale College not only bound its 20-page president's report into the center of *Hillsdale Magazine*, but it also emphasized the package's dual role by wrapping an extra cover around the magazine's usual slick cover. The outer cover, of textured royal-blue stock, carried the masthead and the words "Hillsdale College: President's Report 1987/1988" embossed in gold. A die-cut window exposed a color photo of the president from the inner cover, which featured a montage of commencement photos.

Editor Bill Koshelnyk has been happy with the two-fer's results. It both saves postage and allows the quarterly magazine to have an extra full issue of editorial matter, since the president's report used to take up one of each year's four issues.

What's more, he says, "people reading that particular issue for its other features get exposed to a thorough view of Hillsdale's activities over the previous year. This is important because we're aggressively expanding our circulation beyond the immediate college community. Consequently, we're planning more such piggybacking in the future."

Blurring the boundaries

When is a two-fer not a two-fer? First, when it's editorial material just made to *look* different. Second, when it's material of outside origin published as part of the magazine itself, rather than bound-in as a separate entity.

Several magazines—including those of Hollins College, the University of Toronto, and Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey—change paper stock in their center signatures for alumni news and class notes. This gives those departments the feel of a separate bound-in piece, but the material is really part of the magazine's regular editorial content.

As an example of the other extreme, *DePaul* devoted the first dozen pages of one issue to a major campaign announcement. Allan Kipp, manager of publications, chose not to set the section off physically or graphically. Instead, he added only a brief editor's note at the start. "Integrating it into the editorial content of the magazine actually gave it more emphasis," he says.

Similarly, the University of Toronto's annual giving report took up 16 pages in the back of the autumn 1988 issue. A separate title page, running heads, and narrower columns set the section off only slightly from the editorial pages. And Washington College's magazine devoted the second half of its 64-page fall 1988 issue to its annual report, which followed the magazine's standard editorial grid precisely.

However, Meg Dooley of Columbia prefers to design noneditorial inserts to appear quite different. "We strive toward a distinctive architecture for the magazine and work hard on our features and departments to give them a special look," she says. "Paid advertising—or inserts—aren't a part of that structure."

The final alternative, of course, is to simply break up a pair of publications and mail them separately. That's what Ohio Wesleyan University decided to do after editors had to sandwich a 70-page 1986 gift report into a 40-page magazine. In 1987 OWU upgraded the report into a separate 92-page publication, complete with a color cover. The new publication consisted of one four-color signature wrapped around the hefty honor roll.

"Both the magazine and the report deserved to have their own identity," explains Pam Besel, editor of *Ohio Wesleyan Magazine*. "Separating the annual report so that it stands alone gives it greater importance.

"Not only that, the overall appearance of the alumni magazine is lessened when it has 70 extra pages inserted in it. The magazine itself offers enough material to absorb."

Donna Shoemaker is editor of the Alumni Magazine Consortium. Based at Johns Hopkins University, the AMC is a service to other colleges and universities to assist them in publishing their alumni periodicals and other publications.

Editors Under Siege

Are you fighting for your periodical's life? Here's the ammunition you need.
by Donna Shoemaker

Call it the classroom that delivers—directly to homes and offices—the culture of the written word. Call it the courier of personal reading pleasure and public awareness. Or call it education's paper ambassador, reaching people even the most diligent admissions officer, fund raiser, or president couldn't hope to visit in person.

But whatever you call a campus periodical, these days you're likely to find it being called upon to justify its ways and means. As a highly visible, big-ticket item—and ironically, especially if it looks superb—it can become a target for trimming.

Consider this example of a periodical under siege: One major state university had to put a glossy new magazine on indefinite hold a week before it was due at the printer. Internal politicking and debates about how best to convey the institution's image scuttled the launch that had been in the works for a year and a half. Other periodicals have had to reduce their frequency, circulation, size, staff, or free-lance budget—and often their impact.

Today's editors face a multitude of problems, including skimpy budgets, administrators who are skeptical of periodicals' goals and effectiveness, busy alumni with no time to read, and weak editorial products.

Even if your institution is committed to putting *more* resources into its periodical, you still face the challenge of making sure that the magazine, tabloid, or newsletter carries out its mission with efficiency and effectiveness, substance and style.

"Lots of college administrators feel that a periodical is something that's nice to have around when times are good—then you can support it pretty well," says Walt Collins, editor of *Notre Dame Magazine* at the University of Notre Dame.

"But if times get tight, then its utility is more easily questioned than other things," he says. "Obviously they're not going to cut back the staff in admissions office. [illegible] beef that up. And certainly they're not going to cut back on faculty—except maybe by attrition. But cutting a periodical just looks kind of handy."

In a time of tight budgets and tough competition for readers' time, how do you demonstrate that your periodical is a bonus, not an onus?

Some ways are hard to quantify, but they echo the ethos of education itself. John Synodinos, president of Lebanon Valley College, puts it succinctly: "Reading words matters."

Other ways are tangible, such as readership studies and reader involvement—those letters, calls, and checks from contented consumers.

Proving your periodical's value is difficult but not impossible. Suggestions from campus editors across the country may smooth the way for you.

Intangible methods

To justify your campus periodical, you must first know *why* it exists—and be able to articulate that mission.

Any school, college, or university has to pay at least maintenance-level attention to its graduates, says Daryl McCullough, director of alumni relations at Albright College. He sees alumni as stockholders who deserve to know the institution's status. A periodical becomes that report to investors.

John Soisson, editor of the award-winning *Portland Magazine* at the University of Portland, envisions a magazine as an elegant department store—true to its French root, *magasin*, meaning warehouse or store. "You might go to buy socks, then a few days later, you go back to buy a suit," he says. "You keep going back to the same store, and once you're in there, you find other things that engage you."

Browsing through campus news or bumping into an old friend in class notes, a reader strolls through the departments or features at leisure. Says Soisson, "A magazine gives you a range of options for communication that you don't have in other forms. [illegible] where. Nationally, there's a glut of specialized magazines for golfers, gourmets, and golden agers, yet there's a vacuum when it comes to magazines of ideas. "It's a natural thing for university magazines to fill that vacuum," Soisson says. "Really, it's what we should be doing, filling a need that the commercial world is neglecting."

Tangible methods

Recognizing the intangible contributions a periodical makes is one thing; coming up with hard evidence is another. Here are solid ways to measure your periodical's usefulness.

- *Voluntary subscriptions.* You can't make your point much clearer than by getting readers to voluntarily pay for a magazine they could otherwise receive for free.

For twelve years, *Notre Dame Magazine* has not only wowed CASE Recognition Program judges but also prompted some 25,000 alumni and friends to voluntarily subscribe. (The usual gift is $15; the program raises more than $325,000 per year.) This makes the periodical more financially independent and also shows how much readers value it.

- *Readership surveys.* If you're looking for proof of your periodical's worth, a survey is the most scientific method you can use.

Take the University of Pittsburgh. To measure the impact of *Pitt Magazine*, the university included questions about the periodical in an alumni survey and also sent a separate survey to a random sample of its 165,000 readers. The results were a clear vote of confidence: Some 99 percent of the 40,000 who responded said the magazine projects a positive image of the university, and 95 percent said it encouraged their involvement with Pitt.

Other institutions use different quantitative methods to gauge interest. Every other year Tyler Junior College takes a readership survey one step further, according to Billie Pye, editor of *Apache*. She sends her 11,000 readers a [illegible] postage-paid return [illegible]

back, checking off their answers to her readership questions. She tallies their responses and distributes them to the college's Executive Council. "With a two-year college," she says, alumni "alliance and loyalty will go to the four-year school." So she uses every way she can to win and prove their support.

• *Awards.* Having outside affirmation of your magazine's quality can be an effective way to build support from inside your institution. It can't hurt to have solid evidence that experts in your field think your work is exemplary.

But David Fryxell, executive editor of *Pitt Magazine,* cautions against using awards as the only measure of what a periodical actually accomplishes for your institution. "Though we were thrilled to be named a top-10 magazine recently," he says, "the magazine wouldn't be a success if the judges loved it and readers ignored it. We hope to keep the magazine an award-winner that readers respond to."

• *Reader feedback.* Talking with readers can give you a real feel for whether they value your periodical. If you aren't sure what they think, ask.

Two weeks after each issue of *Portland* goes in the mail, Soisson calls 15 randomly selected readers and asks them a handful of questions. Did they receive the magazine? What kinds of stories do they like to see? The response "keeps us in focus. When we get that feedback, we pass it along to the VPs and the president." This shows that readers have strong opinions about the magazine.

Soisson keeps a testimonial file and summarizes in an annual report for his bosses the comments readers have made, the response the periodical has drawn, and how it spent its funds. He [illegible] the magazine's [illegible] to ask alumni [illegible] think. At the registration desk at Rice University homecomings, visitors can pick up the latest copy of Rice's large-format magazine, *Sallyport,* and talk to the staff about what they like—and don't like.

Focus groups are another way to get feedback from your audience. Albright College, for example, drew together a select group of alumni during a day [illegible] them with [illegible] them "to really delve into their perceptions of the magazine's worth, content, and relevance to their interests," says Janice Schiffman, editor of *Albright,* the college's twice-a-year feature magazine.

Combined with comments from *Albright*'s editorial board, surveys, and readers, the focus group helps guide the editors in improving content rather than just "resting on our laurels," she adds.

Collins hits the road to gauge and build support for *Notre Dame Magazine.* Last spring, he gave seven informal talks to regional alumni clubs as far away as Texas and Alaska. He realizes that those 300 to 400 people are the active alumni, but as he reminds Notre Dame's alumni office, "You've got the active ones, but I've got them and everyone else. And you can't ever tell who's going to leave something in the will."

• *Reader rapport.* If your administration counts keeping in touch with alumni among its priorities, pound home the point that your periodical does just that. "Sometimes the periodical is the only thing alumni receive that gives any hint of what's going on at the university," says Bill Noblitt, director of university relations at Rice. "Once you build up credibility, it's like a train that's moving—you can't stop it. Our alumni feel very strongly about the importance of *Sallyport.*"

Rice's editorial board, which includes many alumni, has been adamant about not wanting to read merely "about fund drives or good news," says Suzanne Johnson, editor of *Sallyport.* "If you don't do anything for alumni other than ask them for money, they won't be sending you money. You have to cultivate them.

"We try to reinforce the idea that we're keeping the alumni constituency involved with Rice, at least indirectly. For a lot of them who have moved out of state, it's their only link with the university—one thing the university gives to all of its alumni, regardless of whether they've contributed or not."

Likewise, only 400 or so of the 10,000 graduates from Culver Military Academy and Culver Girls Academy come back for a reunion each year. For the rest of the academy's graduates, the quarterly *Culver Alumnus* is their main source of contact with their schools, says Editor Mary Ellen Hamer.

• *Class notes.* Is your periodical deluged with information on readers' lives after graduation? If so, this is a sure sign that they really read the magazine—and an important point to call to your superiors' attention.

If you have trouble filling your class notes section, follow Portland's example. "If [readers] send us something, they know it's going to get in," Soisson says. "We go to great lengths to encourage people to give us information for class notes. We have printed pads that we distribute to faculty to jot down information" about former students with whom they keep in touch.

And when Portland's development office does phonathons, callers ask for news for the column and note any comments about the magazine.

• *Contact with administrators.* Cultivating political allies on campus is another way to ensure support for your magazine. If you don't have them, here are a few suggestions.

Elise Hancock, after returning from a two-year break in editing *Johns Hopkins Magazine* at Johns Hopkins University, set up individual meetings with administrators and faculty to renew acquaintances. "I would do the same if I were new," she says. "It gave me a quick tour of the institution and lots of really good story ideas. Also, the key players now know me, so I can call them and I hope some of them call me. At the least, they have to know the editor thinks their opinions matter."

In planning each issue of *Portland,* Soisson sends a memo to key administrators and faculty. He tells them what's coming up and solicits their ideas. "It makes them a part of it and reassures them that I'm not working outside the system," he says.

Other editors employ similar strategies. Each year, Pye at Tyler Junior College sends deans her publication schedule with a note asking for their cooperation in getting information.

Fryxell at Pitt informs faculty members when an article mentioning their work gets a national award or is reprinted in another publication. His goal: "to show them the magazine is being taken seriously."

• *Financial support.* Proving that your periodical makes a monetary contribution is often difficult, but some editors say they can do it.

Pitt Magazine has made an obvious difference in annual support, says Fryxell. "It's a synergy that's going on, with the magazine serving as an informational and inspirational tool. It's

causing even people who aren't jumping up and volunteering to look at the university more favorably." Indeed, Pitt's vice president for development and university relations credits the magazine as a key element in a recent fund-raising surge.

"You cannot expect alumni to be loyal to the institution when all they receive are letters asking for money," adds Steve Hannan, Ashland University's director of public information and editor of *Accent*. He can point to the magazine's role in shaping a more closely knit alumni association and increasing annual giving, the number of alumni associations, and alumni volunteer admissions recruiters.

"There's been a lot more support over the past four or five years, and we're not doing a lot of programs differently," he says. "What has made a difference is a consistent periodical that we mail out on a regular basis."

The bottom line

At its best, a campus periodical becomes the voice of an institution. Says Synodinos at Lebanon Valley, "If I feel good about a magazine, I feel good about the institution."

Conversely, a poor periodical can reflect poorly on an institution. Says Noblitt, "I firmly believe that if you send out a second-rate piece, it will make your university look second-rate and your audience feel second-rate."

Culver's Hamer agrees. "The quality of the magazine is the quality of the institution in readers' minds. If the magazine weren't as good as it could be, there would be questions about what has happened to the school."

All in all, the best way to ensure your periodical's future is to pinpoint the needs of your readers and your institution—and then tailor your periodical to meet those needs.

"When periodicals are not well done, when they look like they were cranked out in a church basement or were meant only to glorify individuals, then they do a lot of harm," says Synodinos. "When they are substantive, well-designed, and reflect the spirit, values, and mission of the institution, they are valuable."

Donna Shoemaker is editor of the Alumni Magazine Consortium. Based at Johns Hopkins University, the AMC is a service to other colleges and universities to assist them in publishing their alumni periodicals and other publications.

Staying Alive

When the budget cutter cometh, be ready to slash costs and revive revenues
by Tina M. Hay

When New England's economic recession turned into a budget crisis for Massachusetts in 1989, at least one institution had to make multimillion-dollar cuts. The University of Massachusetts eliminated classes, cancelled contracts, and forced departments to give back a percentage of their budgets.

In the periodicals office, Managing Editor Rachel Morton looked for ways to save $18,000. She slashed the circulation of *Contact*, the university's longtime research magazine, by more than half. She produced one issue entirely in black and white. She cut the *Alumnus*, the university's alumni tabloid, from an average of 24 pages to 12. She put out one issue just four pages long.

And then the state's financial crisis got worse.

Faced with further cuts, Morton decided to take a more dramatic step for 1990: She eliminated both *Contact* and *Alumnus* and replaced them with a hybrid called *Massachusetts Magazine*—a magazine with an alumni news insert. The new quarterly has a pared-down mailing list, one fewer staff member, and a production budget 20 percent below that of its predecessors.

"Rather than continuing to nibble away at the quality and size of two publications," Morton says, "we thought it made sense to think in terms of having one publication and making that publication as good as we possibly could."

Massachusetts' experience may be extreme, but it isn't unusual. Magazines are expensive propositions, and university budgets can barely keep up as printing and postage costs escalate. How to hold down costs is a vital issue everywhere, even on campuses that aren't in desperate straits. "I've been at Brown for 19 years," says Dusty Rhodes, editor of the *Brown Alumni Monthly*, "and the subject of how much money we're going to have has come up almost continually."

Because it represents such a big line item, an alumni magazine is an easy target for budget cutters. "When you're looking to trim $25,000, the magazine looks like an 800-pound gorilla just sitting there," says Richard Baznik, vice president for public affairs at Case Western Reserve University.

Periodicals editors at institutions large and small, public and private constantly confront financial pressure. Most say they've faced it increasingly in recent years. In an attempt to cope, they pursue a wide range of strategies.

Paring expenses

If you're like most editors, you first look to cut your costs. You might try something simple, like using fewer photographs, or a more long-term strategy, such as finding a cheaper printer. Here's a sampling of cost-cutting approaches from editors throughout the country.

- *Consolidate.* Like Massachusetts, many institutions have discontinued two or more periodicals and created a new, leaner publication. For example, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, formed *Rutgers* magazine by merging an alumni magazine, an alumni newsletter, and a research magazine—as well as their budgets, mailing lists, and staffs.
- *Reduce your frequency.* To save money without having to scale down the look of the magazine, some editors have reluctantly eliminated one or more issues from their annual publica-

tion schedule. Emory University saved $20,000 per year by dropping from six issues of *Emory Magazine* to five. In the past 25 years, the frequency of *Old Oregon*, published by the University of Oregon, has shrunk from six times a year to four and then three as costs rose and funding failed to keep pace.

But this tactic may create unexpected problems. When *SMU Magazine* temporarily cut back from four issues to three in 1986, Southern Methodist University lost one issue's worth of alumni address changes. "The university had a hard time keeping its database up-to-date," says Editor Patricia Ann LaSalle. "So it was paying a high price for communicating less often with its alumni." The next year the university reinstated the fourth issue.

• *Prune your mailing list.* To save on both printing and postage, some editors trim their circulation. Morton at Massachusetts stopped mailing to parents, pared the friends list, and dropped several categories of university employees. To avoid other cuts, she distributes two different versions of the periodical. Every year, all alumni receive one issue of the full magazine, including an alumni association insert. For the other three issues, only contributors receive the full magazine; noncontributing alumni get just the insert.

• *Trim printing and postage costs.* Editors constantly look for clever tricks to shave a few dollars—or a few thousand dollars—from their printing and postage bills. Those who've abandoned outside typesetting in favor of desktop publishing, for example, save thousands annually. *Emory Magazine* reduced its costs by $1,500 per issue when it went desktop; similarly, *Old Oregon* saved $1,800 an issue.

When Mary Ruth Yoe became editor of the *University of Chicago Magazine* last year, she discovered that a free-lancer was not only designing the magazine but also pasting it up. She renegotiated with him: Now he lays out only the feature stories, while Yoe herself does roughs of the less complicated departments for paste-up by the magazine's type house. She estimates her savings at several thousand dollars an issue. The next step, planned for the coming year, will cut costs further: Chicago will go desktop.

Old Oregon Editor Tom Hager, who won a gold medal in the 1989 CASE Recognition program for periodicals resource management, advocates prudence: "All costs should be oriented to what you can see on the page. You should see every dollar." Many editors, he says, spend money on more costly classes of postage—an expense that readers can't see. By mailing his publication third class, Hager saved about $3,000 per issue, or 7 percent of his budget. To offset the slower delivery time, he moved the production schedule up two weeks.

Raising revenue

What if you've done everything you're willing to do to hold expenses in check and you still come up short? You'll need to find more money.

First, you might try looking in house. You may be able to get more funding from your own administration simply by becoming a better negotiator for next year's budget. Often that means working to make sure the university understands the magazine's role.

"We make our case in a lot of different ways," says SMU's LaSalle. "We let people know how we're dovetailing with their efforts." For example, the admissions office uses *SMU Magazine*. "It gives prospective students and their parents an image of SMU that they might not ordinarily have," she says, "and it's more journalistically credible than a prospectus or viewbook." Also, local and national media pick up article ideas from the magazine. LaSalle reminds the administration about that at budget time. "We want to promote the mindset that the magazine is an integral part of the university."

Yoe at Chicago suggests you show your administration what the competition is doing. Find out about the size, frequency, staff, and budget of alumni magazines at peer institutions. "Then you present those figures—and samples of their magazines, too, because the powers-that-be aren't always familiar with the competition."

But in many instances, the administration simply has no more funds to give. If so, you need to look beyond the institution—a good policy in any case, according to Laura Freid, publisher of *Harvard Magazine* and former editor and publisher of Boston University's *Bostonia*.

"University publications need to diversify their revenue streams," Freid says. "If your only revenue stream is the university's finance office and there's a budget crisis, you could be in deep trouble. Also, if you have only one source of revenue—for example, the PR office's budget—it's very tempting for that office to control you editorially. Having several different revenue streams makes for a healthier publication."

Outside revenue comes from two primary sources: readers and advertisers. Here are some ways to tap them.

• *Seek reader contributions.* Simply by asking readers to contribute $10 or so each to defray costs, you can raise a substantial amount for your periodical. Voluntary subscription programs are extremely popular because they're a quick, easy, and relatively inexpensive way to raise funds.

• *Sell advertising.* Display and classified advertising brings in a few thousand dollars a year for some alumni periodicals; other, better-established advertising programs net tens of thousands. But launching an advertising program can take time. The University of Oregon conducted a yearlong study before beginning its advertising effort. To gauge how well the university could expect to fare, Hager conducted a survey of 18 other magazines that take advertising and commissioned an independent analysis of his magazine's advertising potential. When the results indicated that Oregon could indeed make money through advertising, Hager decided to go ahead.

Most institutions then hire a sales representative—either an independent one, who works on commission, or someone on staff. Then the magazines develop a media kit, establish rates, and set up procedures for handling the paperwork. Some editors say you can expect to wait several years before turning a profit.

"Often people get starry-eyed about advertising without realizing how much cost is involved and how much competition is out there," says Harvard's Freid. "When you go beyond the old-boy network, you're competing with everyone else, and there's a lot of cost in sales staff, surveys, and presentation kits. It isn't as easy as it looks, and even people who have been doing it for years have experienced declines in sales in recent years."

• *Join an advertising network.* If you lack the resources to sink into the start-up costs for advertising, or if your magazine's circulation isn't particularly high, you might get together with other institutions and offer advertising

jointly. "Few institutions on their own would have enough readers to even show up as a blip on the screen of a media buyer," says Case Western Reserve's Baznik. "But an aggregrate profile can be very attractive."

Baznik chairs the new University Magazine Network, a consortium of university magazines with a combined circulation of 850,000. The brainchild of Howard Levine, New York University's assistant vice president for public affairs, the consortium is patterned after a network that has sold space in Ivy League magazines for decades. The new network has nine member universities: Brandeis, Carnegie Mellon, Case Western Reserve, Duke, Johns Hopkins, NYU, Rutgers, the University of Pittsburgh, and Washington University in St. Louis.

The universities initially hired a New York-based consultant to conduct market research and soon discovered they have much to offer advertisers: 60 percent of their readers have advanced degrees, 82 percent hold professional or managerial jobs, and 94 percent have credit cards. Average household income: $81,000.

The network then hired a firm to serve as sales representative and another to help with promotion and paperwork. Because the network sales efforts are just getting started, Baznik and his colleagues don't expect to see substantial sales until 1991.

• *Go commercial.* A few magazines, such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology's *Technology Review* and Boston University's *Bostonia*, sell on the newsstand. The result: a broader readership and additional revenue. But for this tactic to work, the institution must have a large concentration of alumni in a single city or region. Such instances are rare.

Spending the money

Whatever approach you use to gain additional funds for your periodical, it's a good idea to decide in advance what you plan to do with the extra money. *Old Oregon*'s Hager hopes advertising revenue will eventually pay for one additional issue each year.

At Santa Clara University, Editor Peg Major uses reader contributions to improve *Santa Clara Magazine*'s quality. The money allows her to purchase higher-quality photographs, pay freelancers a more competitive rate, and perhaps add interior color.

Washington University in St. Louis hopes joining the University Magazine Network will bring revenues to underwrite an expansion of *Washington University Magazine*. "We could do a lot more editorially if we could support the additional pages," says Mary Ellen Benson, executive editor and director of publications.

It's also important to make sure your superiors agree that the money you raise comes in addition to, not in place of, your university allocation. "You have to be careful that your budget doesn't get cut as a result of your revenue-producing efforts," says Harvard's Freid. "Otherwise you'll find new streams of revenue, and then the university will say, 'Well, good; we'll just reduce your budget by that amount.' Then you'll be doing twice as much work for the same budget." Freid recommends negotiating with the administration in advance to avoid misunderstandings.

Deciding what's right for you

Most editors recommend pursuing not just one approach but a mix of strategies to make a periodical self-support-

Should You Ask Your Readers for Money?

Judging from the number of inquiries he gets, Walt Collins thinks more editors are pursuing voluntary subscription programs than ever before. Every month, the editor of *Notre Dame Magazine* hears from two or three colleagues who want to know how his program, one of the nation's oldest and most successful, reaps more than $325,000 a year. Similarly, Brown University raises $200,000 annually through a program that dates back to 1975. The University of Chicago raises $100,000.

Even a smaller institution—Santa Clara University, with only 35,000 alumni—netted $54,000 the first time it asked its readers for help.

Typically all that's required is a letter of appeal from the editor and a business reply envelope for readers to send in their contributions. Some editors, rather than using direct mail, make their pitch in an ad next to a bound-in envelope in the magazine itself. Wrap-around covers are yet another way to carry your request to readers. To conduct its first appeal this summer, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, is using a special cover bound over the top of the magazine's regular cover. (If you try these methods, however, track your responses. Direct mail wisdom indicates the bind-in will cost less but bring in less.)

Harvard University offers a twist to its voluntary subscription program: Readers who respond become eligible for prizes, including a car, a cruise, and a hundred smaller premiums. (Most of the prizes are donated; Harvard acquires the rest by trading them for ad space.) The raffle, plus a sophisticated program targeting new contributors, renewals, and lapsed subscribers, accounts for more than half of *Harvard Magazine*'s annual budget.

Some universities prefer not to ask alumni for money to support a magazine, especially when the development office is already asking alumni for money for other causes. But many editors say the amount they're requesting is so small that it poses little threat to the annual fund. Of the 5,000 University of Chicago alumni who gave to the magazine in 1988-89 and also received solicitations from the university's central annual fund, 71 percent gave to both causes. "I don't think we're taking away givers; we're probably just getting one more little gift from people who were already committed to giving," says Yoe.

Most editors caution that voluntary subscriptions work well only when a magazine is well-established and of high quality. Santa Clara officials were eager to request donations after *Santa Clara Magazine* had published just a few issues, but Editor Peg Major held them off for three years. "The best advice we got from Walt Collins at Notre Dame was, 'Don't do it too soon,' " Major says. "Your product has to be pretty darn good before you can be successful."—TMH

ing. *Brown Alumni Monthly*, for example, gets about 60 percent of its budget from the university and the rest from a combination of advertising and voluntary subscriptions.

Harvard Magazine, which is independently incorporated and must pay its own way, relies on reader contributions for more than half its budget and advertising for about one-fifth. The rest of the budget comes from sales to various outlets, including the university personnel office, which distributes copies to faculty and staff as an employee benefit.

Deciding what's best for your institution requires investigating what other colleges and universities do, asking your colleagues what did and didn't work for them, and figuring out what fits your own circumstances.

"It's important that editors consider what they have to offer, what it's going to cost them, and what they have to gain," says Freid. "They need to take a look at who they are before getting dressed up."

Tina M. Hay, who is a frequent contributor to CURRENTS, is assistant to the dean for communications in the College of Health and Human Development at Penn State, a public institution based at University Park and 22 other campuses.

Sanity in the Small Shop

Tips from an expert on editing an alumni magazine with a small staff and limited budget
by Aida K. Press

We recently received a letter from an alumna asking us to publish a rundown, with pictures, of the *Radcliffe Quarterly* staff.

"The staff" of our 48-page magazine looked at each other and laughed. The alumna's request would not have taken up much space: Half a photo of me, and a full photo of Mary Jane Curry, the *Quarterly's* assistant editor, would have done it. The rest work for free.

With a limited budget and a singularly (literally) small staff, is it possible to put out a quarterly magazine? Not really, but it sure is fun trying. We have a few methods that help us maintain the delusion that it *can* be done.

Make the most of volunteers

Being a feminist and believing that women should get money for their

The Birth of an Issue

Before every issue, I suffer a bad case of stage fright. I never fail to worry that this time the unthinkable will really happen: No one will send in a publishable article, and I will have to send out a magazine that contains 48 blank pages. When the issue finally comes out with articles, illustrations, class notes, and a cover, I view it, frankly, as a miracle.

Most of our issues are built around a single theme, such as Examining Health Care, Women Who Could Rule America, or 1984. One of my favorites was Daughters and Mothers, our December 1984 issue.

The idea for that issue began with an over-the-transom article we received in January 1983 from psychologist Natalie Low, who had written for us before. The piece was a report of her research and observations as a clinical psychologist that, contrary to the teachings of Freud, a daughter's relationship with her mother is the most significant one in her life. Rather than breaking that tie, as Freud urged as a sign of emotional security and mental health, daughters want to preserve it, even when it is very stressful and difficult.

The article as it was presented was not in a form suitable for a general audience. It was too long and too technical and the references too complex. Nevertheless, when I read it, I could hear daughters and mothers all over the world heaving a great sigh of relief. At last, someone was giving permission to women to continue that bond while still having rich and meaningful relationships with their husbands, lovers, children, siblings, colleagues, and friends.

The author reworked several versions of the article during the next year and a half. When it began to take final shape—about six months before publication—I turned to the *Quarterly's* editorial advisory board, who agreed that we should devote an issue to daughters and mothers.

We talked about whom we should invite to write for us. Mary Catherine Bateson was at Radcliffe's Bunting Institute completing *With a Daughter's Eye*, her book on her parents, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. She agreed to let us use an excerpt. Cultural anthropologist Beatrice Whiting, scholar-in-residence at the Murray Research Center on campus, said she would write on daughters and mothers in underdeveloped countries. And anthropologist Laura Nader promised to contribute an article on daughters and mothers of the Zapotec Indians in Mexico.

Psychologist Rachel Hare-Mustin, who was at Harvard Graduate School of Education, offered to collaborate with her daughter on an article about their research on Chinese daughters and mothers. In talking with Dr. Hare-Mustin, I discovered that she had also conducted research on how college students view mothers. (They don't want to stay in the kitchen, but they wished their moms would.) She agreed to write up that research, too.

But we didn't just want secondhand accounts from scholars; we wanted to hear the clear voice of the daughters and mothers themselves. Several of our advisory board members offered to contribute.

Boston Globe reporter Phyllis Coons, mother of five children (three of whom are Radcliffe alumnae), wrote of how her husband's death freed them to create new relationships with each other. Elizabeth Winship, author of the syndicated column "Ask Beth,"

work just as the other sex does, I have a little trouble asking people to contribute their services for nothing. The only way my conscience gets away with it is if I can tell myself I am really doing them a big favor.

I'm giving them the opportunity to write about the thing they're dying to broadcast to the world: nuclear energy, how the doctor goofed up their operations, how Freud was all wrong about daughters and mothers. I tell myself (and them) that 28,000 intelligent, thoughtful, prestigious women, often wives of equally intelligent, thoughtful, prestigious men, all over the world will read their article. In other words, they're lucky *we're* not charging *them* for the chance to appear in the magazine.

My conscience has a harder time with free-lance writers, the people who earn their daily bread by the pen (or word processor). So last year, I persuaded the giver of budgets to let me include an honorarium for the free-lance writer who has been volunteering as book review editor.

Get the best for your money

Still, no amount of persuasion will let you get by without paying for the other services that go into producing a magazine. Designers, photographers, illustrators, typesetters, printers, mailers, and the U.S. Post Office have the nasty expectation of receiving cash for their work. (Sometimes they even want to be paid for what they don't do, so don't forget to check their bills against the bid price.)

You may have a hard time convincing the budget folks about the need for free-lance designers, illustrators, and photographers. "Designer" somehow calls to their minds some effete gentleman who talks through his nose and calls people "dahling." "Illustrator" often doesn't fare much better. The hard-nosed business managers always want you to get someone in the art department, preferably a work-study student, to plan the magazine's design and lay it out. Worse yet, they don't understand why you can't do it yourself. After all, if you can write and edit, why can't you also design and illustrate? (Some of my colleagues can and do, and I try hard not to be too jealous of them.)

Budget types do seem to understand that film and developing may cost some money. The trick will be to persuade them that a five-minute photo session with a student in photography class just won't do for the four-color cover. You may have to spend real money for a professional who owns portable lights, silver umbrellas, and more than one camera. In no case must you ever let them talk you into hiring their 13-year-old son who has just received for his birthday a brand-new, completely automatic marvel of Japanese workmanship.

There is not too much you can do about postage. The rules of the U.S. Postal Service are quite complicated, and what works for your closest competitor won't necessarily work for you. For example, some of my colleagues have switched their second-class permits to third class and use overseas mailing services for foreign mail. We're still using our second-class permit be-

---

volunteered "My Mother Treats Me Like A Baby," an article on teen-age daughters and their mothers. Another board member, herself an immigrant, suggested interviewing immigrant mothers and their daughters for a discussion of how their values differed. Our poetry editor, Ruth Whitman, discussed how her daughter's shift from a career in social work to writing poetry created a new bond between them.

Just as I was beginning to worry that the issue was getting emotionally overloaded, board member Gertrude Akers volunteered her mother and herself for an exuberant duet, "Two Gertrudes." Mom's piece began, "When Giddy was a baby, I dropped a book on her head while she was nursing. Did she stop and scream? Certainly not. She merely flicked her big dark eyes up at me as if to say 'butterfingers' and kept right on with her dinner." The daughter described her mom as a combination of "Lucille Ball's Machiavellian imagination, Katharine Hepburn's accent, and Auntie Mame's adventurousness. With the energy and elan of all three of these characters, she has burned through the last 60 or so years without taking a breath."

At the board meeting, I heatedly argued for including an article on my own maligned species, the mother-in-law. The strength of my argument did me in—everyone nominated me to write that one.

One of the amazing things about an issue is how it takes on a life of its own. Most of the daughters and mothers didn't show each other their pieces before sending them to me. Yet many of them contained the same incidents, the same issues, even the same tone. Nor had I known or planned that three of the mothers had been refugees from Hitler. One of the most moving pairs of articles was "Remembering the Holocaust" by an Auschwitz survivor and her daughter, a medical student.

Then came the question of illustrations. For my mother-in-law piece, I turned to the comic strips of "Momma" and "BC" that one of my board members had sent me, and received permission from cartoonists Mell Lazarus and Johnny Hart to reprint. Lazarus was a little suspicious of the context, so since we were on deadline, I read him the article over the long-distance line to California.

We went to a stock photo company for a photo of Auschwitz. We commissioned a local artist to come up with several other illustrations. She was scheduled to go abroad, and I wasn't sure whether she was going to remember to drop off the finished illustrations *before* she got on the plane.

For the cover, we turned to a former Bunting Institute fellow, Barbara Swan. She was so excited about the theme that she immediately began to tell me about her own relationship with her 80-year-old mother and her newly married daughter. No, I didn't need any more articles, I tried to break in, but I desperately needed a cover. I wanted a strong statement that would show what we were trying to say in the issue's 21 articles: Daughters and mothers were separate individuals, each with their own lives, but the bond between them was strong.

The issue drew a high tide of mail. Readers ordered armfuls of extra copies for their daughters or mothers. Mental health professionals told us we had made a major contribution to the literature. While all of that was tremendously heartwarming, for me that issue was history. I was already having an anxiety attack about what to put on the blank pages of the next issue.

—AKP

cause any savings we would realize by switching to third class on our domestic mail would be wiped out by our overseas mail. The rules are totally different if you accept advertising or have a subscription list.

The best way to save money on printing is by bidding out your job. But don't be fooled into taking the lowest bidder, even if your budget director thinks you should. Ask editors whose magazines you admire for recommendations. Sometimes if you use the same paper they do, you can both save money. Using the printer's house stock, if it's at all decent, is another way to save. But there's no point in going for the bottom price if the printer can't keep to your schedule, follow your designer's directions, or deliver the job on time.

It's important for you to find a printer you like to work with and whose advice you can trust. He or she can save you from making horrendous mistakes, such as trying to print yellow over black or running a glossy black cover without varnishing it.

If you choose a sloppy printer, you'll hate the job when (and if) it appears. If you choose a quality printer, you'll pay a little more, but it will be worth it. The photos you paid a professional photographer a lot of money to take will be crisp and clean, the colors will be trapped, and you'll get the number of copies you ordered. Through bidding and checking with colleagues, we were able to find a printer who could supply glossy paper, a four-color cover, and super service at *less* than what we were paying for matte finish, black-plus-one-color cover, and inattentive service.

Typesetting, especially if it includes preparing the mechanical, is another area where quality counts as much as price. We had been working with a typesetter who was practically a soulmate, the kind who calls you up and asks if you really meant to put the captions in italics when you've never used italics before. We never worried about payment for printer's errors vs. author's alterations and were always able to agree on extra charges without counting the commas. His price was right, he was always on time (even when he told us he wouldn't be), and his mechanical was a miracle of precision.

We were, to say the least, apprehensive when our word-processing equipment was installed and we had to switch to a typesetter who could work from a disk. Colleagues who already had word processing suggested a typesetter whose price was reasonable and work was good. I also solicited bids from other highly reputable typesetters who could handle our job, but they were way beyond our budget.

It took the new typesetter and me a while to get used to each other's personalities, but we seem to have whipped each other into shape.

Computer virtues (and vices)

I confess that I have fallen madly in love with our word-processing equipment. I gave my own typewriter away about a month after I learned how to communicate with my terminal. We use typewriters in our office now only for envelopes, which are too cumbersome to do on the printer.

Word processing saves an enormous amount of time. You don't have to retype manuscripts over and over again, making fresh errors each time. You just make the corrections on the terminal and print out a clean copy. Article writing goes much more smoothly, since you don't have to keep tripping over your mistakes, false starts, additions, deletions, and so on. On the minus side, however, is the fact that when authors send you beautifully typed manuscripts that don't need a word of editing, you can't pass them straight to the typesetter. You have to input everything.

Still, the time we lose in this task pays off later. We now do all the keyboarding and practically all the coding, and we edit the copy as carefully as if it were a first set of galleys before we send the disk to the typesetter. Galleys come back in three days, and the only mistakes to correct are occasional electronic errors. We no longer need a second set of galleys before we do the paste-up. (Many editors now transmit by telephone and receive their typeset copy in about a day.) We're still working out our new schedule, but we may be able to save a week.

If your business types expect immediate cost savings from computerizing, tell them they'll be disappointed. It takes a couple of issues to work out the quirks, and you may find yourself paying even more than you used to. Still, by our third issue on the new system, we found that the equipment saved us about $1,000 per issue.

Plan—if you can

"Plan ahead" is advice that you have undoubtedly heard pronounced in sonorous tones at CASE conferences and editing workshops. It's probably a very good idea, and someday I may even try it.

Other people's magazines seem to be planned a year, or at least six months, in advance. We usually talk about ours for a long time, but I don't really get around to soliciting articles until three months to six weeks ahead of time. This often generates quite a bit of excitement, nay, hysteria, about whether we'll have an issue or not. This system is bad for your nerves, and I earnestly urge you to do what I say, and not what I do.

I almost never run out of ideas because I have an extraordinarily creative and resourceful editorial advisory board that meets quarterly to brainstorm with me on ideas and suggest authors. Sometimes board members write articles themselves (several contributed articles to our "Daughters and Mothers" issue, for instance), or help soften up influential friends. Also, they will read manuscripts for me if I need a second opinion.

But I'm the one ultimately responsible for the magazine, and although I listen carefully and respectfully to advice from the board and other people, I make the final decisions about everything that goes into the magazine.

Rules of thumb

If I had to cite the most important tips I could offer the editor who's short on staff and funds, I'd include these:

- Tell your authors you need the manuscript at least one month before it goes to the printer. That way, when an author tells you that an article will be a few days late, you can be magnanimous instead of frantic.
- Talk as many people as you know into doing things for you gratis.
- Bid out your printing, typesetting, and mailing, and check the bids when the bills come in. But don't automatically go for the lowest bid. Quality really counts.
- Choose a designer you can trust absolutely. He or she will be the most important professional on your team. Also, don't scrimp on photographers and illustrators. By asking around, you can find really good ones who are willing to do a job for a nonprofit magazine at much less than commer-

cial rates, and probably at no more than some amateur who "has a flair."

Of course, with scarce resources, it really won't make much of a difference what kind of advice you follow. No matter how good your intentions, your planning, or your scheduling, you will probably always find yourself frantically trying to keep one step ahead of the deadline. In the one-person (or 1½-person) shop, that's about the only thing you can count on.

Aida K. Press is editor of Radcliffe Quarterly *and director of public information at Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 1985, Press won the CASE District I Eleanor Collier award for her contributions to advancement.* Radcliffe Quarterly *has been named one of the Top 10 college magazines several times, including 1991, when it also won a gold medal in the CASE Recognition program.*

Going Green

How campus publications offices are making the move to recycled paper
by Ann Granning Bennett

Today many campus administrators agree with Kermit the Frog's well-known lament: "It's not that easy bein' green."

As more institutions make recycling a way of life, publications staffs are realizing they must respond in kind. Internal and external audiences alike recognize and applaud the three-arrow recycling emblem appearing on more printed materials.

A spot check to find out how publications managers are using recycled paper drew mixed responses—from "trying to use whatever we can" to "too expensive," "hard to find," and "never used a recycled sheet in my life."

Another concern emerged as well. "You know," says Norm Darais, director of university publications at Brigham Young University, "there's a lot of confusion as to just what recycled paper is."

Indeed, the prospect of using recycled paper raises a wide variety of practical and aesthetic concerns, ranging from cost to quality. But with careful consideration of these issues—as well as a look at how colleagues on other campuses are faring—you can sort through the confusion and decide whether to go green with your own publications.

A gray definition

Let's get back to that question about what constitutes recycled paper. In June 1988, the Environmental Protection Agency attempted to give us the answer. But the definition is far from clear-cut.

In its guideline (not to be confused with a regulation), the EPA states that to qualify as recycled, high-grade bleached printing and writing papers must contain a minimum of 50 percent *waste paper*. The other 50 percent may be *virgin fiber*.

For consumers, interpreting this guideline may be just as confusing as determining how much saturated fat is in that pat of margarine on the breakfast table.

The EPA divides waste paper into two classes. One is *pre-consumer* or *post-commercial* waste. This is paper that never reaches our offices or homes—materials such as envelope clippings, bindery trimmings, ends of rolls, mill wrappers, obsolete inventories, and rejected stock. Nearly all (95 percent) of this pre-consumer waste paper gets recycled, according to the September/October 1990 *Step-by-Step Graphics* magazine. Efficient paper mills have been recycling for years.

The second category is *post-consumer* waste. This is paper we've put to use and discarded. Common examples are used office paper, computer paper, newspaper, paper cups, cardboard, and envelopes.

The Washington, DC, newspaper *Waste Age's Recycling Times* says paper manufacturers recycle far less post-consumer waste (only 40 percent) because "the systems needed to separate, collect, and transport post-consumer waste are not well developed."

Alan Davis, founder and president of Conservatree Paper Company in San Francisco, voices a concern of many EPA critics: "All federal, state, and local governments could be made to conform with the EPA definition of recycled paper without using any waste paper that has ink on it." In other words, the paper could meet the current standards without helping to get at the problem of reclaiming post-consumer waste.

If you really want to help the environment, says Meg Duskin, print buyer for Greenpeace USA in Washington, DC, "look for paper that exceeds the EPA's present guidelines." And confirm with your paper merchant that it has a significant post-consumer waste content.

A double standard

Campus publications pros may have the environment in mind when they consider recycled paper. But in reality, the decision often depends on dollars. Ironically, going green may mean spending more to conserve more.

Craig Jolley, marketing communications manager for Zellerbach, a Mead company, gets to the root of the problem: "For almost 150 years, pulp and paper mills have located close to the source of raw materials (forests) and away from the source of supply for reclaimed waste paper (major population centers)." The expense of moving waste paper to the mill or building a new mill is a deterrent to producing recycled paper.

He also notes the following factors that can drive up the price of recycled paper for the consumer:

- the cost of de-inking—or removing ink, glue, and other contaminants from—used paper,
- the price of paper made from post-consumer waste,

• the cost of establishing and managing recycling programs and sites to handle recycled materials, and

• the capital investment necessary to build or convert paper machines to produce recycled paper.

Today's market provides additional deterrents:

• lack of confidence by paper specifiers in the reproduction quality of recycled paper,

• paper suppliers' misconceptions about prices, and

• high demand for and short supply of recycled paper.

Lack of competition also plays a role. "Prices for recycled coated enamels are higher because competition in that grade line is weak," writes Michael Mangan in *Step-by-Step Graphics*.

Because of all these economic factors, recycled paper generally costs up to 15 percent more than nonrecycled—depending in large part on the quality of the paper and percentage of waste it contains. But recycled paper proponents warn against assumptions about its price. Not only is the cost not terribly far out of line, they say, but the gap is also narrowing.

Another argument from the advocates: Designers choose among papers in a variety of price ranges, so they should regard recycled as yet another choice in the spectrum. As Davis of Conservatree says, "Compare the prices of recycled and nonrecycled specialty paper like rag bonds and designer papers. The recycled sheets are equal in price or less expensive than the nonrecycled."

Author Mangan agrees. "Uncoated recycled offsets and some text grades are comparably priced or even priced below some virgin offsets and text grades," he says.

Demand and familiarity are two factors that influence the price of recycled paper. Paper buyers are becoming more familiar with suppliers, mills, and recycled paper grades, and more mills are introducing recycled fiber into previously virgin grades. "So prices for recycled grades," Mangan concludes, "will closely match and in some cases could be lower than remaining virgin grades."

In light of these differing opinions on cost, Conservatree's Davis asks that you give recycled paper providers a chance to bid when you're choosing paper. "Just ask for paper—xerographic, bond, offset, whatever it is you want—and let recycled suppliers compete head-on."

Overcoming obstacles

In addition to cost, campus publications professionals have raised a number of other concerns about using recycled paper. But for each concern, there's a response from those who've gotten around the pitfalls and found solutions. Here's what the experts say about the problems commonly associated with recycled paper.

• *Limited availability.* When specifying recycled paper, keep in mind that only a few mills make it and you may have to wait for a mill run. Furthermore, paper merchants may not have recycled paper on their shelves. Few can afford to stockpile paper that may not sell.

If you specify recycled, allow at least 30 days for delivery. And just in case, have an alternate stock in mind.

• *Muddy reproduction.* Because recycled paper is more absorbent than virgin paper, colors can turn muddy. Yet there are solutions.

E the Environmental Magazine prints on Halopaque—a 50-pound uncoated stock with a blue-white cast from Cross Pointe Paper Corporation. The paper is 50 percent recycled and contains up to 10 percent post-consumer waste. *E* art director Jennifer Marcus gives it a "great" rating and suggests you follow certain guidelines for successful reproduction.

First, stay away from dark color transparencies, she says; instead, use clearly defined ones. "The more contrast between light and dark in a photo, the better the reproduction will be."

Second: "A skilled color separator is the key when working with recycled stock," she says. So choose separators who understand and have had experience preparing color separations for printing on recycled paper. "They should lessen the black while enhancing the other colors—yellow, magenta, and cyan," she says. And using a 120-line screen (as opposed to the standard 133-line screen) keeps the photos from getting too dark on press.

• *Dullness.* Many say brightness in recycled paper is, on average, slightly less than that of nonrecycled paper.

Jo Leiby, director of purchasing at Graphic Arts Center in Portland, Oregon, agrees with this criticism. But she holds out hope for the future. Among the publications GAC prints on recycled stock are the Patagonia and Esprit clothing catalogs and several annual reports. "As the demand grows, the quality level will increase," she says.

In fact, recent tests by MACtac, an Ohio paper manufacturer, determined that recycled paper's brightness levels were close to those of nonrecycled.

• *Longer drying time.* Opinions—and evidence—vary widely on this issue. The MACtac tests showed that recycled stock took an average of 10 minutes longer to dry than did nonrecycled.

On the other hand, recycled paper uses the same finishing process as nonrecycled sheets, according to a June 1990 article in *Garbage* magazine. A sheet that's made properly will not differ in drying time.

• *Lint on the press.* As publications managers know, lint can lead to such problems as spotty printing. And some say recycled paper has more lint than nonrecycled.

The MACtac tests, on the other hand, showed no "picking" or lint buildup occurred on the press's blanket or rollers.

Manufacturers produce recycled papers that meet the same technical standards as nonrecycled. Although some printers object to recycled stock because they must adjust their machines each time they switch to a new sheet, others report no such problems.

Conservatree's Davis points out, "All papers, including nonrecycled, contain lint." When this results in jamming, printers should do as they've always done with virgin-fiber sheets: "Arrange (with the supplier) to replace the paper." The problems arise, he says, when you order paper solely on the basis of price and ignore technical specifications.

"Everything you do is garbage"

This accusation from Karrie Jacobs, a columnist with the architecture and urban planning magazine *Metropolis*, set an auditorium full of designers on edge during the 1989 national convention of the American Institute of Graphic Arts. She referred not only to the materials designers use but to the style clients hire designers to create—a style that is disposable as well.

Interviews with publications designers and managers reveal that campuses

are grappling with and, in some cases, solving the problem of when and how to cut down on the garbage by using recycled paper. Here's a sampling of your colleagues' experiences and opinions.

• *University of California, Santa Cruz.* "It's the publications professional's responsibility to urge campus clients to use recycled and recyclable papers," says Publications Manager Jim MacKenzie. For some UCSC clients, no other option will do.

The UC Santa Cruz Foundation, for example, just printed its 1989-90 annual report on Coronado SST Recycled Text with a Simpson Evergreen cover (both recycled and recyclable). This is a choice the administration wholeheartedly supports.

And in response to letters from several concerned constituents, the alumni association plans to publish all future materials on recycled and recyclable paper. It will begin with Eco-Wove envelopes that have recyclable glassine windows rather than windows made from nonrecyclable plastic.

While many of MacKenzie's other clients take an initial interest in recycled paper, they balk when they discover that recycled stock costs 5 to 10 percent more than comparable nonrecycled. In that case, MacKenzie recommends using paper that at least is recyclable. Happily, the UC-wide printing operation is seeking volume pricing on a high-quality recycled paper it can offer at competitive prices.

• *Brigham Young University.* Darais and Graphic Communications Art Director McRay Magleby keep recycled stock on their minds. Their newest project on the stock is an insert for the freshman catalog. Also, "we're redoing our identity program, and we'll be making a push for recycled on our letterhead, envelopes, and business cards," says Magleby. "We're trying for an organic, rather than slick, look on most of our projects."

• *Scripps College.* Designer Susan Swan Guntner terms herself a member of the Speckletone Fan Club—which, if it really existed, would consist of aficionados of that line of recycled paper.

"We're consciously making an effort this year to print on recycled paper when budget allows," she says. "We've found Coronado Opaque (a recycled white vellum stock) to have better holdout on press than other bright white vellums that are more expensive and not recycled." This means the paper is less absorbent, so the ink stays on top of the sheet, the dot maintains its size better, and the resulting image is sharper.

Despite her satisfaction with this stock, Guntner says she still bases most of her paper decisions on cost.

• *Smith College.* Although Smith hasn't used recycled stock for its main recruiting pieces, Director of Publications John Eue has specified it for several smaller companion brochures and plans to use it for the next president's report. "I have no complaints," says Eue. "We spec recycled stock when we can because we like the textures and colors that are available."

• *Lehigh University.* Marv Simmons, director of art and design, used Simpson Evergreen Gloss for the campus's most recent viewbook. "We decided in midstream to specify it," he recalls. "We wanted to make a positive choice for the environment."

He admits having two concerns about the paper. First, many of the images were shot before he designated the paper—which could have meant poor reproduction. But as it turned out, the photos held well on the recycled stock.

And second, he was concerned about brightness. "At the end of the press run, we did a sample on Lustro Offset Enamel, and the reproduction on that nonrecycled sheet was livelier," he says. "But we're not sorry we used Evergreen. I feel good about our viewbook and the choices we made. Our heart's in the right place, and this was a necessary first step."

• *Radford University.* Art Director Kitty Irwin views recycled paper as a design challenge worth the trouble.

"Glossy and slick are out. We're implementing design that is compatible with recycled stock. Money isn't as much a problem for us as availability and quick turnaround are." She says recycled is worth the cost in most cases. Or, to offset the price, she might use three colors instead of four.

Not all Radford's publications are on recycled paper, however. The college's viewbook cover runs on nonrecycled coated stock, for example, but part of the inside is on Speckletone. And all undergraduate recruitment fact sheets run on Speckletone. For future projects, Irwin encourages campus clients to choose recycled whenever it's available—for jobs ranging from letterhead to the annual fund report.

• *Hotchkiss School.* With the help of consultant Carol Cheney, Director of Development Tina Chandler recently produced a fund-raising appeal on recycled stock. "We felt that because we were doing an extensive job of recycling on campus, it was important for us to reflect this image with our constituents," Chandler says. "That was a big part of our rationale for using recycled paper in our publications."

Hotchkiss reported no problems with the recycled stock. "The paper worked as well as any other we've used," Chandler says. "And because it was consistent with our education programs, we were proud to print on recycled paper."

• *Ohio State University.* Using recycled paper has not become a fad at OSU, says David Hoover, director of publications. Nevertheless, he's searching for a high-quality, laser-compatible recycled sheet for all university letterhead, and he suggests recycled sheets to clients when appropriate. He also says he hopes soon to print all fund-raising publications on recycled paper.

• *University of Alberta.* Rick Pilger, communications coordinator for the university's office of alumni affairs, reports that although he's always interested in recycled paper, cost and availability have been limiting factors.

While he's used recycled for small print runs, the relatively high price of recycled stock has prevented his using it in jobs with modest budgets and long runs. "Nor is it always easy to obtain recycled paper well-suited to the job," he says. "We don't have as ready access to recycled paper—particularly some of the premium papers—as do people in the larger U.S. markets."

He is confident, however, that both price and availability will improve as demand increases. "They are already improving rapidly," he says.

• *Wilfrid Laurier University.* Publications Manager Barry Lyon isn't very impressed with recycled paper. In one press run of 10,000 brochures on recycled stock, he says, the campus print shop experienced greater ink absorption, increased press time, and high wastage in folding.

Nevertheless, printing on recycled paper remains an issue at Wilfrid Laurier. "There is a tremendous push from students to print all our publications

on recycled paper," Lyon says.

Though the cost of high-gloss, clay-coated recycled papers is beyond Lyon's budget in many cases, he is taking steps to address the students' concerns. For example, he's just purchased 36 tons of recycled paper. The university can now print all four of its calendars on recycled, and buying in bulk negates the extra cost.

• *Hampshire College.* Director of Publications Melissa Stephen is an ardent supporter and user of recycled stock. "The environment is very much on the minds of Hampshire students," she says, "and certainly our use of recycled stock reflects their concerns."

Currently, financial aid brochures, class profile sheets, course guides, and applications all run on recycled paper, as do the internal tabloid and alumni magazine. Hampshire also plans to redesign its viewbook and search pieces and print both on recycled stock this spring.

Although Stephen remains concerned about recycled paper's availability and variety, she gets around those problems. "We compensate by choosing the paper before finalizing the design," she says, "In other words, we select design elements to suit the paper, rather than the reverse."

Last year, for example, she designed a holiday card for the president with only a week's notice. Her printer had only one paper to suit her time frame, and the choice of both graphics and colors had to fit that paper. "But it worked out," she says, "and the president got a lovely, environmentally friendly card when he needed it."

Green is here to stay

"The United States is the Saudi Arabia of waste paper," critics say. But while the oil sheiks make millions off their resources, Americans are burying theirs in landfills. That's why more and more people are realizing that we have a responsibility to reuse America's second forest: the 64 million tons of paper and paperboard that go into the trash each year.

Many publications experts say that the solution to the problems with recycled stock is greater consumer demand. They predict that when orders for recycled paper increase, mills will respond by refining post-consumer waste collection methods and by building more de-inking plants. And then manufacturers will answer by making recycled paper better, more available, and more accessible.

In the end, Kermit is right. "Green," he sings, "can be cool and friendly-like, and green can be big like an ocean or important like a mountain or tall like a tree." It's up to responsible school and university administrators to plant the seeds.

Ann Granning Bennett is a publications management consultant based in Portland, Oregon. She works nationally with designers Bryan Peterson of Peterson & Co. in Dallas and Joseph Erceg of College and University Publication Solutions in Portland. She is also chief publications evaluator for CASE's Critique Service.

Editor's Note: The recycling business is a rapidly growing one. Costs and other specific information in this article were current as of fall 1990. Consult the sources listed in this article for more up-to-date information.

How to Speak Recycling

• *De-inking:* A process that separates inks, glues, and other contaminants from used paper and breaks down that paper into fibers useable for new paper. This cleans paper used in any process—such as printing, laser printing, photocopying, typing, writing—that contaminates the fibers.

• *Dry mill broke.* Paper, including butt rolls at the paper machine and winder, spoiled in the process of drying, calendering, winding, rewinding, and trimming.

• *Fiber:* Strands of reuseable pulp from waste paper suitable for reprocessing. Fiber is similar to virgin materials from trees.

• *Forest residue:* Whole tree chips, saw mill waste, and sawdust.

• *Post-consumer waste:* Used paper, paperboard, and fibrous wastes from retail stores, offices, and homes. This also includes corrugated boxes; old newspapers and magazines; mixed waste paper; computer forms; tabulating cards; photocopies; cancelled checks; and all paper, paperboard, and fibrous waste that enter and are collected from municipal solid waste.

• *Pre-consumer waste* (also post-converter, post-commercial, post-industrial, and secondary waste): Dry paper and paperboard waste generated after the papermaking process is complete. This includes envelope cuttings, bindery trimmings, rejected press signatures, and other paper and paperboard waste from all types of converting. This term also covers waste paper and paperboard from the obsolete inventories of merchants, wholesalers, dealers, printers, converters, and others.

• *Pulp:* Fibers from which paper is produced on papermaking machines. Pulp comes from tree and plant materials or from reclaimed paper.

• *Pulp substitutes:* An intermediate-grade material (between pulp and waste paper) that doesn't require de-inking. This generally designates those grades, such as envelope cuttings or unprinted broke, that any fine or printing paper mill can use.

• *Reclaim:* Similar in meaning to "recycle." Reclaiming includes gathering and reworking used materials.

• *Recovered waste paper material:* Materials containing pre-consumer and post-consumer wastes that have been recovered and diverted from solid waste. These do not include materials and byproducts generated from and commonly reused within an original manufacturing process.

• *Recyclable:* Something that can be recycled. Do not confuse *recyclable* with *made from recycled.*

• *Solid waste:* Waste materials disposed of in essentially their original form by burial, landfill, and sometimes incineration. More than 40 percent of solid waste in the United States is paper and paperboard.

• *Virgin fiber:* Nonrecycled fiber; fiber derived from wood chips after the pulping process.

• *Wet mill broke:* Paper recovered from the wet process of the paper machine.—AGB

At Your Service

For more information on using recycled paper, check out these sources.

• For lists of recycled paper makers and recycled paper vendors, write E.H. Pechan & Associates, 5528 Hempstead Way, Springfield, VA 22151 (Attention: Recycled Paper).

• For a copy of the EPA procurement guideline or a current list of recycled-paper product mills and vendors, call the EPA procurement guideline hotline at (703) 941-4452.

• For a poster-sized chart that rates more than 200 paper lines by weight, finish, and performance; lists paper manufacturers; and provides stock at a glance, send $3.50 ($4.50 outside the United States) to HOW Paper Rater Chart, 1507 Dana Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45207.

• For a 4-by-5 slick of the three versions of the recycling and recyclable logos, send a $3.50 check (prepaid, includes shipping) made out to ECO/Eva Anderson, 101 Transit St., Providence, RI 02906.—AGB

Bibliography

Books

Astin, Alexander W., and Lee, Calvin B.T. *Invisible Colleges: A Profile of Small Private Colleges With Limited Resources*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972.

Beierle, Andrew W.M. "Publications and Periodicals," *Handbook for Alumni Administration*. Edited by Charles H. Webb. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989.

Cutlip, Scott M., and Center, Allen H. *Effective Public Relations*, 4th edition. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

Fisher, James L. *Power of the Presidency*. New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984.

Ford, James L.C. *Magazines for the Millions: The Story of Specialized Publications*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969.

Hancock, Elise. "Shaping the Content and Character of Alumni Periodicals," *Handbook of Institutional Advancement*. Edited by A. Westley Rowland. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1986.

Helmken, Charles M. "30 on Thirty Editors and (More)," *Creative Writing and Editing*. Edited by Emily Flint. Washington, D.C.: Council for Advancement and Support of Education, 1979.

Keller, George. "Can Alumni Publications Be Both Loyal and Free?" *Communicating With Alumni*, New Directions for Institutional Advancement. Edited by A. Westley Rowland. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1979.

Payne, Darwin. "The Age of Mass Magazines 1900-Present," *The Media in America: A History*. Edited by W. David Sloan, James G. Stoval, James D. Startt. Worthington, Ohio: Publishing Horizons, 1990.

Smith, Nancy. "In Defense of Class Notes," *Creative Writing and Editing*. Edited by Emily Flint. Washington, D.C.: Council for Advancement and Support of Education, 1979.

Weiner, Richard, and Colasurdo, James F. *College Alumni Publications*. New York: Public Relations Publishing Company, Inc., 1980.

Williams, Dorothy F. "The Traditional Media Give Way to the Nontraditional," *Communicating with Alumni*, New Directions for Institutional Advancement. Edited by A. Westley Rowland. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1979.

_____. "The Unsinkable Alumni Magazine," *Communicating with Alumni*, New Directions for Institutional Advancement. Edited by A. Westley Rowland. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc. 1979.

Journals and Magazines

Bliwise, Robert J. "Détente with Development," CURRENTS, November-December 1988.

Carman, Bernard R. "Beyond Control," CURRENTS, March 1987.

Collins, Walton R. "What's Wrong with Alumni Periodicals," CURRENTS, June 1985.

Lace, William W. Letter to the editor, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 6, 1991.

LaSalle, Patricia Ann. "The Move to Magazine," CURRENTS, April 1988.

_____. "Magamorphosis," CURRENTS, March 1986.

Ledger, Marshall A. "Who's in Charge Here?" CURRENTS, March 1987.

Morgan, Ruth P. "The University and Adversity," *SMU Mustang*, Winter 1987.

"Special Report: The Hot Magazines Aim at Special Audiences," *Business Week*, May 2, 1970.

Stadtman, Verne. "Alumni Publications: Inevitable, Invaluable, and Inhibited," *American Alumni Council News*, February 1963.

Stapleford, Fred H. "Franklin's Modern Half-Century," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 1951.

Other Sources

LaSalle-Alberger, Patricia Ann. "Alumni Publishing in Small Private Colleges with Limited Resources." Master's thesis, American University, 1976.

Fryxell, David A. Survey of CASE periodicals editors on editorial freedom, 1990.

LaSalle, Patricia Ann. Survey of award-winning college and university magazine editors, 1989.

_____. Survey of chief advancement officers who supervise award-winning editors, 1989.

Lyle, Anthony A. "*The Pennsylvania Gazette*: Since World War II," unpublished report, The University of Pennsylvania, 1985.

Reports of the Judges, University Magazine Category, Recognition Program, Council for Advancement and Support of Education, 1988, 1989, 1991.

Rhodes, Robert M., Brown University, telephone interview, 1989.

Shoemaker, Donna, "Alumni Periodical Goals, Resources, and Quality: A Study of the Perceptions of Campus Editors, Alumni Professionals, and Journalism Educators." Master's thesis, University of Maryland, 1988.

Storad, Conrad J. Letter to Ann Granning Bennett, College and University Publications Solutions, June 18, 1991.

About the Author

Patricia Ann LaSalle

Patricia Ann LaSalle has won more than 65 regional and national awards for the periodicals she has edited for institutions of higher education. After working in newspaper journalism, corporate public relations, and government affairs, she joined the News Bureau staff of The American University, where she edited the faculty-staff newsletter and served as assistant editor of the alumni tabloid. Later, at Georgetown University, she edited *Georgetown Today*, the magazine for alumni and friends. After earning a Master of Science degree from The American University, she edited the newsletter and journal of the College and University Personnel Association in Washington, DC. As a staff member of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, she served as assistant editor of CURRENTS and edited monographs and handbooks. In 1983 she began her association with Southern Methodist University as magazine editor. She now also serves as director of periodicals and a senior manager in the Advancement Division, for which she chairs a strategic planning task force. An adjunct professor, she teaches the honors editing section in the Department of Journalism. *SMU Magazine* has been named a CASE Top Ten Magazine and has won other CASE awards for writing, design, photography, illustration, special issues, and publishing improvement. LaSalle was elected to the CASE Board of Trustees in 1991 and serves as chair of the Commission on Periodicals.